

**Testimony of Mark Jockers to the Senate Environment
and Natural Resources Committee
Hearing Room C, March 27, 2013
SB523**

Introduction & Thank You

Chair Dingfelder and Vice Chair Olsen, members of the Committee, my name is Mark Jockers and I am the Government and Public Affairs Manager for Clean Water Services in Washington County. I have worked on water resource management in the Tualatin Basin for more than 20 years. I am testifying on behalf of Clean Water Services and the Special Districts Association of Oregon.

Who we are, why we care

Clean Water Services is a county service district providing water resource management services to more than 530,000 people in urban Washington County and small portions of Clackamas and Multnomah Counties. Clean Water Services provides wastewater and stormwater services, manages flow in the Tualatin River and is working with our partners to coordinate regional integrated water supply planning to ensure we meet and balance the long-term water needs of homes, businesses, farms, fish, water quality and economic development.

Clean Water Services is committed to protecting public health and environment. We have a 40-year history of working with our local, regional and national partners to reach beyond regulatory requirements to deliver value for our ratepayers, the environment and the Tualatin River. Thanks to our community's investment in advance wastewater treatment, comprehensive stormwater management and a basin-wide restoration effort, the Tualatin River and its tributaries are healthier today than they have been in generations.

Concerns

Clean Water Services operates four award-winning wastewater treatment plants that clean 60 million gallons of water day before releasing it to the Tualatin River from up to seven permitting outfalls. We have serious concerns with SB523 including:

- Placing signage on these outfalls does nothing to improve water quality nor does it provide the public with useful information.
- If persistent bioaccumulative toxins and water quality are the concerns, our collective focus should be on pollution prevention and source control, not installing and maintaining signs.
- Pollution prevention and source control works. Clean Water Services has seen real success from pollution prevention and source control measures including:
 - The legislature's ban of phosphate detergent in the early 1990s resulted in a 22% reduction in phosphorus in Clean Water Services influent.
 - Since the legislature's 2007 bill requiring dental amalgam separators to control mercury discharges, Clean Water Services has seen a reduction of more than 8 pounds a year of mercury at our four facilities.
- Under the bill, DEQ is required to install and maintain all signs in the state—a remarkable burden on the Department at a time when they need to focusing their efforts on protecting and improving water quality.
- Practically, how will DEQ (or cities and public agencies) place signs where they can be seen in the summer months, but not destroyed by flood waters in the winter months. Flow in the Tualatin River during the summer is as low as 180 cubic feet per second (cfs); in the January average flow is 4000 cfs flooding the banks and likely destroying any signs.
- Cities, public agencies and utilities would need to secure access to river and streambanks from private and public property owners to install the signs.
- Municipal water quality permit holders operate under strict DEQ permits, complying with some of the nation's most stringent water quality standards. Clean Water Services facilities are staffed by certified operators 24 hours a day and are required to rigorously monitor more than 15,000 compliance points annually at our four treatment plants. If

there is a problem with our outfall or within the plant, we are required to immediately notify DEQ.

Thank you and closing

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. I'm happy to answer any questions.

