

February 27, 2013

The Honorable Arnie Roblan
Chair, Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, Oregon 97301



Portland International Airport
7000 NE Airport Way Portland OR 9721
Box 3529 Portland OR 97208
503 460 4151

Dear Senator Roblan:

The Port of Portland supports passage of Senate Bill (SB) 517. This bill would allow our Port Commission President and Executive Director to assign either one of our volunteer Port Commissioners or a Port manager or staff to represent the Port on drainage district matters.

The Port of Portland ("Port") is a landowner within the three (3) drainage districts located along the south shore of the Columbia River in the Portland Metropolitan Area. The three drainage districts are chartered and receive their authority under ORS 547. Each of these districts is governed by their own landowner-elected board, and the day to day affairs of each are managed by the Multnomah County Drainage District ("district").

The three districts are Peninsula Drainage District 1 ("PEN 1"), Peninsula Drainage District 2 ("PEN2"), and Multnomah County Drainage District ("MCDD"). The Port is currently represented on the landowner-elected MCDD Board of Supervisors by Port of Portland Commissioner Bruce Holte.

Drainage district matters are typically operationally-focused, regulation driven, and technical in nature, but are also strategic with long-term consequences for the Port and the region.

Currently, three (3) strategic issues that are demanding significant board member involvement include:

- 1) Federal recertification of the MCDD levee system and accreditation of the flood maps,
- 2) Establishment of a sustainable financial model for the districts, and
- 3) Evaluation of the overall governance structure of the districts based on who benefits from and pays for the levee system and district flood control services.

Thorough and adequate representation of the Port's interests in these matters often requires significant time in district board deliberations, and in other discussions with landowners, stakeholders, elected representatives and public agencies; these deliberations often require technical expertise. In the Port's case, it is very difficult for our volunteer Port Commissioners to find the time to fully represent the Port's interests on these critical strategic matters, and the MCDD and the Port would be better served to have an option for how we are represented.

SB 517 gives drainage districts more flexibility regarding who, from a public agency, can serve on its Board. The Port of Portland supports this change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Philip A. Ralston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Philip Ralston
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Port of Portland

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