



TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS®

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Feb. 16, 2015

Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Re: SB 210 Natural Resources Partnership Coordinator

Chair Edwards and Committee Members:

Tualatin Riverkeepers is a community based organization working to protect and restore the Tualatin River watershed located in Washington and parts of Clackamas and Multnomah counties. The Tualatin River supports the industrial and agricultural base of Washington County and provides important habitat and recreational resources for a growing community.

Tualatin Riverkeepers opposes SB 210 which seeks to establish an expedited review process for Department of State Lands, Water Resources Department and cities and counties for comprehensive plan amendments.

We are most familiar with DSL removal/fill permitting and have concerns that an imposed expedited review process could undermine adequate review of complex projects. Further, the 404 removal/fill permit in many cases is jointly determined by the US Army Corps of Engineers and with an important role for DEQ in determining through 401 water quality certification whether a proposed project would impact water quality. Additionally, these review processes have public comment periods that occasionally are extended and as requested by the public, opportunities for public hearings.

Imposing an expedited process we fear would undermine the thorough review required to assure public resources, wetland, streams, rivers, lakes, and floodplains are protected and if needed sufficient conditions and mitigation is required of applicants. These are critically important public trust resources that will be our best source of resilience with the uncertainty of climate change.

Locating development in environmentally sensitive areas can place those developments at greater risk of loss from natural disasters – flooding, landslide, and erosion. These are decisions that should not be rushed and should not be weighted toward economic gain.

Finally, what happens if an agency does not meet the imposed deadline – is the review automatically approved, would the agency be penalized, does the agency have the right to refuse an expedited process. There are too many uncertainties with this bill that should not be left to a rulemaking process.

Tualatin Riverkeepers urge you to oppose SB 210.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Wegener". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Brian Wegener, Riverkeeper