

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of House Bill 2277
House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use and Water
February 26, 2015**



Chair Clem and Members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area. Governed by the elected Metro Council, we provide a broad range of public services that include land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

Metro supports HB 2277, which would modify the authority of drainage districts to perform flood control activity. Metro is an interested party in the ongoing process focused on the adequacy of the flood control levee system along the Columbia River, extending from North Portland east to the Sandy River. This system is vital to protect the significant economic base represented by airports, businesses, institutions, parks and homes. The process under way is a complicated effort intended to ensure the levee system is sufficient to meet increasingly stringent standards established by the Army Corps of Engineers and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The Portland area had a wake-up call on Memorial Day, 1948, when the levee breached and the City of Vanport flooded, killing 15 people and leaving thousands homeless. The nation had a similar wake-up call with the destruction of New Orleans due to levee failure during Hurricane Katrina. Both events provide stark evidence of the importance of ensuring that the levees meet current engineering standards.

Metro is particularly concerned for two reasons. First, we are a property owner of the Expo Center, Blue Lake Park, Chinook Landing and the James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp. These popular public attractions would be in jeopardy should another devastating breach occur. Second, the Columbia Corridor is home to a significant regional industrial base and the location of an important supply of vacant developable industrial land to meet the needs for job expansion within Metro's urban growth boundary.

SB 2277 ensures that the drainage districts can effectively and efficiently do their job and preserve these important assets. We urge you to support HB 2277.

Thank you very much for your consideration of these comments.