

## Commissioner Jules Bailey

501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Suite 600  
Portland, OR 97214  
District1@multco.us  
503-988-5220



March 20, 2015

Dear Chair Clem, Vice Chairs Helm and Post, and Members of the Committee,

Multnomah County is supportive of legislation that improves the ability of local jurisdictions and districts to maintain and repair critical drainage and flood control projects. HB 2277 is an important piece of this puzzle, clarifying the role of drainage districts in urban environments.

All four urban levee systems along the Columbia River within Multnomah County are managed by the Multnomah County Drainage District (MCDD). The district is an important partner in protecting the lives of Multnomah County residents, businesses, and structural assets. I co-convene the Oregon Solutions process working with jurisdictional and drainage board members, business leaders, and neighborhood representatives to address certification and accreditation requirements in all four of these districts. To date, the Oregon Solutions project has completed an initial engineering assessment in two of the four levee districts, and through this collaborative work I have begun to recognize some of the challenges faced by the drainage districts as currently organized and governed.

Of particular importance in light of our current work, is Section 16 of HB 2277, which clarifies that qualifying districts may make contracts with a federal agency relating to flood control projects under necessary and appropriate conditions. Levee systems are constructed along the topography of flood plains, crossing city and local jurisdictional boundaries. County government helps manage from a regional perspective, but the detailed technical expertise lies within district. Federal agencies (Federal Emergency Management Agency and the US Army Corps of Engineers) are essential partners in levee maintenance, certification, and accreditation, and a direct contractual relationship with a district is appropriate to manage these projects.

Thank you for taking on the issue of drainage districts and flood control this legislative session. Multnomah County is a supportive partner in both exploring these statewide structural and funding issues, and also in coming up with specific solutions in our districts that can be shared and applied regionally and across the state.

We urge your support of HB 2277.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jules Bailey", written over a horizontal line.

Jules Bailey