



American Water Works Association
Pacific Northwest Section

March 1, 2017

SB 474:

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
900 Court St NE, S-411
Salem, OR 97701

RE: *Oppose SB 474 - Eliminates continuing education requirements for landscape construction professionals.*

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the Senate Business & Transportation Committee,

Municipal water providers supply domestic water to more than 75 percent of the population of Oregon and are committed to supplying safe, reliable and cost-effective water supplies to the communities they serve.

Drinking water providers are focused on proactively managing and stretching current water supplies now and into the future. With over a million new Oregonians on the horizon within the next 50 years, well trained licensed Landscape Construction Professionals (LCP) will continue to be an integral part of the water management professional team. Our continued focus, in addition to meeting current Oregon Administrative Rules requiring water suppliers to promote efficient water use and low water use landscaping (OAR 690-86), has allowed utilities to keep pace with growing service populations, higher seasonal water demands, and limited water supplies.

A key partnership in managing and meeting water demands of a growing population is the relationship Oregon water utilities have developed with the landscape construction industry. This is due largely in part to the large quantity of water that utilities distribute for the purpose of landscape irrigation. Ultimately, the competency level of the landscape or irrigation contractor plays an integral role in customer water use and therefore the overall water demands of a water utility.

Water utilities are increasingly adopting a “one water” approach to managing water supplies that places greater focus on the pathways water travels and the associated impacts on system infrastructure and water quality. Utilities regularly commit resources; time, material and technical support to educate landscape construction professionals on the need to retain water on site, proper erosion control methods, and the impacts of irrigation overspray and runoff on watershed health.

Finally, many landscape and irrigation contractors regularly perform backflow prevention assembly work when using compressed air to drain or winterize irrigation systems. The importance of education and

training cannot be overstated when connecting pressurized equipment to municipal water supplies. Public health depends on it.

Passage of SB474 would reduce the level of continuing education and proficiency of the landscape and irrigation contracting industry at a time when legal requirements, emerging technology and best management practices are changing rapidly. High efficiency landscape best management practices continue to evolve and be embraced by water customers. Efficient irrigation control systems rely more on emerging technology and quality data. Watershed health continues to be a priority. SB474 would be a huge step backward.

Oregon water utilities continue to support the licensing and continuing education requirements of Landscape Construction Professionals in Oregon by developing free and low cost educational offerings, and will continue to collaborate with the landscape industry as integral partners in the management of water supplies today and in the future.

Sincerely,

Oregon Water Utility Council

PNWS-AWWA Conservation Committee