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2/8/2019

Respectfully Submitted by:

Dorothy J (DJ) Ezell

Oregon Drinking Water Advisory Committee Chair

Rivergrove Water District Manager, Rivergrove Water District

17661 Pilkington Rd, Lake Oswego, Oregon 97035-5360

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair

Senate Committee on Health Care

900 Court St. NE, HR A

Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SB 27-OHA Drinking Water Services fee authority

Honorable Senator Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee,

During my tenure as Chair of DWAC, I have been educated, had experience with, and been advised as to the **health** of our **Oregon Drinking Water Program**. This has been under the direction of our previous head of the program, Dave Leland, and our current head of the program, Dave Emme. I think it is very important to note that **our program has needs and is ill** and because it has not been properly funded through the Oregon budget's general fund or the fees, we are jeopardizing the **health and safety of all Oregonians**.

I watched and gave my opinion on the last fee increases to the program. I, and our District, supported them, however, in my over 20 years in drinking water, I have always felt that the fees for the sanitary surveys were not set up properly. Rivergrove is a small District, we have **1,375** connections and are serving **4,000 Oregonians**. We are only adding chlorine for residual disinfection and have no treatment plant. Under the present set up we are paying **\$4,800** for a sanitary survey. This could be every 3 years or every 5 years depending on if your system met the criteria for an outstanding performer. However, if the water system was, for example, the City of Lake Oswego at approximately, **13,000** water service connections serving approximately **36,000 Oregonians**, and has a full-blown water treatment facility their cost would be **\$9,600** for a sanitary survey. This does not compute as fair and has been this way for 20 years.

I am really thankful that our current program Director Dave Emme, has taken the stance to educate the Committee on the program's staff shortages, and the fact that only **essential work is priority** and unfortunately that there are some water systems, **servicing Oregonians** falling through the cracks. In his perception, because of the budget and staffing shortfall, he has shared that the department is not able to fulfill their responsibilities of the current Oregon statutes the program is legally required to do. So, what are the options-change the ORS's and delete the requirements of the program for making sure **all Oregon consumers** drink **safe water** or **take the responsibility** to fund the program shortfall and get the staffing up to be able to serve **all Oregonians with safe water**. I really don't think that the

**Committee or any of our legislators** would like to be responsible for doing the second option.

This is not a popular subject but Dave has persevered to research how similar states are funding their drinking water programs and has come up with the findings and schedules of fees that are the basis of SB 27. And it is my current understanding that it will also include the latest amended memo from Andre Ourso, Administrator, Center for Health Protection, dated January 25, 2019, which includes stakeholders' suggestions from previously held meetings.

I have discussed these fee changes with my current Board of Commissioners. They are totally in support of **SB 27** and feel that the yearly increase of **\$400** or as computed **\$.70 per Oregonian** in our District is well worth the money to make our State Drinking Water Program healthy again.

And in addition, one of our Commissioners is an employee of the State of Oregon in the Agriculture department. His comment forthright was "That is the way it should be. When they have to inspect dairies for the State the largest dairies pay more for their inspection services than the smaller ones do because it takes more time to do the inspections." And when I mentioned that other water systems felt that the general fund monies should be increased from the state budget his comment was "get in line so does everyone else."

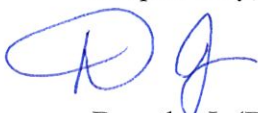
I am impressed by the testimony by the **City of Portland** in the letter submitted by **Michael Stuhr, PE, dated January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019**. This is the one system that will be affected most but they fully **support the passage of SB 27**. In the new fee structure, they will be paying **\$65,000** a year instead of currently **\$2,400** a year, quite an increase. But for each of their **614,059 Oregonians** they will be paying **\$.11** one of the ways to make this new fee structure more palatable for the larger systems.

I only have one critique of the fee schedule that I have shared with Dave and hope to see in the final adopted fee schedule. I do not believe that water systems that just do chemical addition such as we do for chlorination or Tualatin Valley Water does for Fluoride should be in the same classification as those systems with full blown treatment plants. Again, because it takes less time for state staff to go over those types of treatments than inspect a full-blown Water Treatment plant such as one at Lake Oswego or the Willamette Treatment plant in Wilsonville. Hopefully, this will be changed in the adopted fee schedule.

In closing, as **DWAC Chair** and also **Rivergrove Water District Manager** with **full support of my Board of Commissioners** and the **Oregonians** we represent, I am urging **the Committee to support Senate Bill 27** on to the next step in the Legislative process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Dorothy J. (DJ) Ezell

