



CITY OF GRESHAM

February 15, 2019

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Se. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 431

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

The City of Gresham supports SB 431, as an important vehicle to achieving ongoing levee safety, jobs and economic development, and federal recertification. Currently, drainage districts function in our area with the mission of keeping the land behind the levees dry, and facilitating economic development and the critical movement of commerce and people, particularly as it relates to the Portland International Airport and jobs lands that have statewide significance.

These drainage districts, however, were never empowered with the means necessary to provide the daunting maintenance and safety challenges that are presented by the largest river flow in the western United States. With that challenge in mind, and looming federal recertification on the near horizon, we knew that a creative, collaborative, Oregon solution would be required.

SB 431 represents the fruit of that multi-year collaborative effort, which involved many different jurisdictions and a wide variety of stakeholder interests. It has taken an overwhelmingly difficult question -how to achieve recertification and plan for sustainable maintenance and safety upgrades in the future- and achieved a solution that is collaborative and has buy-in from multiple partners. We urge the Committee's favorable consideration and welcome the State's assistance in helping achieve a long-term sustainable future for the Columbia levee system.

Sincerely,

Eric Chambers
Government Relations Director