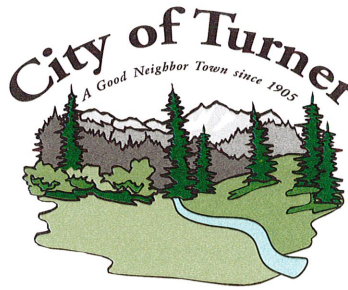


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February 20, 2019

TO: Co-Chair Senator Taylor; Co-Chair Representative Reardon, Members of the Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

FROM: David Sawyer, City Administrator, Turner Oregon

RE: Written Testimony Regarding DEQ's Budget and Stormwater Program Concerns

The Governor's Requested Budget (GRB) for DEQ that is before the Natural Resources Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee contains additional resources (27 new positions) to support the DEQ Water Quality permitting program including five new positions in the stormwater program (Policy Option Package 127).

First, until the State re-engages with stakeholders to evaluate the balance of how fees and general fund revenue support such programs, the longstanding agreement for funding WQ permitting programs at a 60% fees/40% gf split should remain in place. This agreement should be honored, particularly in light of the large magnitude of fee increases proposed.

Second, the Secretary of State's Audit Division should provide a performance audit of the water quality programs to the Governor and the Legislature before DEQ receives any additional funding.

On November 30, 2018, DEQ issued the Phase II MS4 permit by final order. After seven years of stakeholder processes, three different DEQ permit writers and countless shifts in DEQ management personnel, six affected communities have filed separate lawsuits against DEQ challenging the permit. The process was flawed from the start, was not properly supported from the start, and was poorly managed from the start to the end. That direct experience gives little confidence that DEQ can properly manage the important and valuable implementation of this major increase in staffing.

Turner is ready to be a partner with DEQ in protecting water quality and support the resources needed to implement its valuable programs. But first, it must show that it can do the work.

Sincerely,

David Sawyer, City Administrator

Turner, Oregon