



Beaverton, City of  
Clackamas River Water  
Cornelius, City of  
Forest Grove, City of  
Gladstone, City of  
Gresham, City of  
Hillsboro, City of  
Lake Oswego, City of  
Milwaukie, City of  
Oak Lodge Water Services  
Portland, City of  
Raleigh Water District  
Rockwood Water PUD  
Sandy, City of  
Sherwood, City of  
South Fork Water Board  
Sunrise Water Authority  
Tigard, City of  
Troutdale, City of  
Tualatin, City of  
Tualatin Valley Water District  
West Slope Water District

March 18, 2019

Senator Chuck Riley, Chair  
Senate Committee on Business and General Government  
900 Court St. NE, Room 453  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**Subject: SB 935 – Landscape contractor modified license**

Dear Senator Riley and Members of the Committee,

The Regional Water Providers Consortium (Consortium), a group of 22 municipal water providers in the Portland metro area, opposes SB935 for the following reasons:

**Senate bill 935 is unnecessary because there is already a limited license option (OAR 808-003-0035) which just took effect February 1, 2019.** OAR 808-003-0035 is the result of the collaborative work of the Landscape Contractors Board, the Governor's office, League of Oregon Cities, trade association representatives, and the Regional Water Providers Consortium to reduce the barriers of entry into the landscape construction profession in Oregon by creating a modified or limited licensure option. To protect and conserve Oregon's drinking water resources, OAR 808-003-0035 does not permit the design and/or installation of irrigation systems. In contrast, SB 935 would permit the design and installation of residential irrigation systems (four or fewer zones) by contractors with modified licenses without requiring the experience or demonstrable competency needed to design or install such irrigation systems.

**Irrigation systems of all sizes require experience and technical knowledge in order to be properly designed and installed.** Landscape construction professionals play an integral role in assisting water providers with managing the state's precious water resources. Water use is at its highest during the summer due in large part to irrigation. Improperly designed and/or installed irrigation systems can result in substantial leaks, inefficient water use, and backflow of water from the irrigation system into the drinking water system. Requiring those who have licenses to demonstrate their experience and technical knowledge of irrigation principles and best management practices helps to ensure that the water used for irrigation is used efficiently and safeguards the drinking water supply. By adding irrigation design and installation to the scope of limited licensure without requiring individuals to demonstrate their experience and knowledge of irrigation principles, SB 935 diminishes effective management of drinking water resources, as well as consumer and public health protections.

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**SB 935 sends a mixed message.** Current law requires most municipal water providers to complete and implement comprehensive Water Management & Conservation Plans (WMCP) as a condition of their water right to ensure the stewardship of limited water resources. Providing training and technical assistance for landscape professionals on water efficiency is a way for water providers to meet the requirements of their plans (OAR 690-086-0150). This training and partnership are critical to managing peak summer water demand when water supplies are at their lowest. Seasonal landscape irrigation can increase potable water consumption by as much as 60 percent. Everyone should share the responsibility of using our water as efficiently as possible.

Environmental regulations, water policies, irrigation technology, and landscape practices continue to evolve rapidly. **The citizens and communities of the Portland metropolitan area and throughout the state of Oregon are better served by an experienced and knowledgeable base of qualified, licensed landscape construction professionals for projects that require irrigation systems.** Therefore, we urge you to oppose SB935 and continue to support the sound stewardship of Oregon's drinking water resources and the collaborative work already accomplished by the recent adoption of OAR 808-003-0035.

#### **About the Consortium**

The Regional Water Providers Consortium provides leadership in the planning, management, stewardship, and resiliency of drinking water in the Portland, OR metropolitan region. Formed in 1997, the Consortium serves Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties and is made up of 22 water providers that provide more than 40 percent of Oregon's drinking water.

The Consortium implements a regional water conservation program and for more than 12 years has directly supported landscape construction professionals with obtaining the necessary continuing education requirements for full licensure by providing free classes (in Spanish and English) that focus on the principles of efficient landscape water use, best management practices, emerging irrigation control technologies, and overcoming language barriers. Water providers have worked collaboratively with affected stakeholders over many legislative sessions to create flexibility for licensure while still maintaining qualifications and training to ensure efficient water use.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Consortium Managing Director Rebecca Geisen at 503-823-7493.

Respectfully,



Mayor Russell Axelrod  
Chair, Regional Water Providers Consortium Board

cc: Regional Water Providers Consortium Board