



# CITY OF PORTLAND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Room 1000, Portland, Oregon 97204 ■ Nick Fish, Commissioner ■ Michael Jordan, Director

April 4, 2019

Senator Dembrow, Chair  
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
900 Court Street NE, HR C  
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SB 431

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

The City of Portland supports SB 431, with the -2 amendments, which creates an urban flood safety and water quality district in a portion of Multnomah County. Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services manages Portland's wastewater and stormwater infrastructure to protect public health and the environment. The City has a long-standing working relationship with the four existing drainage districts in the area.

The four drainage districts provide important benefits to our entire region, including protecting \$5.5 billion worth of property and infrastructure, much of which is in the City of Portland. The area contributes \$16 billion in annual economic activity to the region, including 50% of the region's manufacturing and warehouse jobs. There are also significant recreational, cultural, and natural sites in the managed floodplain.

The status quo governance and funding structure, which was put in place early in the last century is no longer appropriate for the area. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers levee accreditation standards changed as a result of Hurricane Katrina, which places larger responsibilities on levee managers. The current governance and funding structure does not equitably allocate the costs of flood management in the Columbia Corridor to the many beneficiaries of the system. Responsibility and authority are fragmented across several jurisdictions. The ability of the existing four drainage districts to raise funds is limited and any increase in funding, because of Measure 5, means an increase in the inequities in the system.

The City of Portland has been participating with other local agencies in the Levee Ready Columbia Partnership to identify shared areas of concern and propose solutions. City staff have also participated in the recent work to amend the bill; these processes have been thorough and inclusive, and the City fully supports the -2 amendments.

Portland's long history with flooding has influenced our current practices of improving infrastructure and the environment concurrently. We have worked with the drafters to give this special district the ability to improve water quality and the environment as it also provides for flood protection and drainage. Creation of an urban flood safety and water quality district will serve Oregonians in the near future and for generations to come.

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The City of Portland urges your support of SB 431 and the -2 amendments. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Eric Noll at [eric.noll@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:eric.noll@portlandoregon.gov) or at 503-823-6726.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Jordan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Jordan  
Director, Bureau of Environmental Services  
City of Portland