



PUBLIC WORKS - OPERATIONS

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April 30, 2019

The Honorable Representative Jeff Barker
Chair, House Committee on Business and Labor
900 Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

SENATE BILL 935 – MODIFIED LANDSCAPE CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONAL LICENSE

The City of Albany supplies potable drinking water to approximately 54,000 people in the Cities of Albany, Millersburg and the Dumbeck Lane Water District. We take pride in following best management practices in water conservation to reduce our impact on the environment and to assure a clean and reliable source of drinking water for future generations. Senate Bill 935 rolls back the work the Landscape Contractors Board accomplished to assure irrigation design and installation is completed by knowledgeable and competent professionals by requiring training to obtain a license to conduct this work. The training covers topics such as water conservation/efficiency and how to protect water supplies from backflow and back-siphonage. As a result, we oppose Senate Bill 935 for the following reasons:

1. History has shown that unlicensed landscapers design and install irrigation systems without proper permits. The permit is what requires the appropriate backflow device. Without the permit, utilities, including Albany, must rely on finding these irrigation systems by conducting site inspections and require the appropriate backflow devices after installation is already complete. This is a reactive process that takes time and in the interim, puts the water system at risk of backflow or back-siphonage events which can contaminate the drinking water. Backflow incidents are one of the most common causes of drinking water contamination in the United States.
2. Unlicensed landscapers are at higher risk of designing and installing irrigation systems that don't work properly and are not water efficient because they lack education on the basic water conservation principles of irrigation. Clean drinking water is a commodity that should not be wasted. Utilities are required to complete Water Conservation and Management Plans to assure the water is used beneficially and to reduce waste. Landscapers are our partner in assuring these systems are designed and installed with water conservation in mind.

Senate Bill 935 puts public drinking water at risk of contamination and of wasteful use of this precious resource. We respectfully ask the committee to protect and preserve our drinking water by voting no on Senate Bill 935. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Bailey, Public Works Operations Director

KEK

c: Karen Kelley, Water Superintendent

pw.cityofalbany.net

