



**ORWARN** Oregon Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network



American Water Works Association  
Pacific Northwest Section

February 6, 2020

Representative Helm, Chair  
House Committee on Water  
900 Court Street NE, HR D  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: HB 4043 – Local control of pipe materials for water projects**

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

Oregon Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (ORWARN) strongly opposes HB 4043, which would prohibit local governments from adopting specifications for pipe materials during the design phase in water projects when state funds are directly or indirectly used. ORWARN is a group of 146 water and wastewater utilities whose mission is to support and promote statewide emergency preparedness, disaster response, and mutual aid assistance matters for the public and private water and wastewater utilities in the case of either natural or man-made events.

Technical decisions related to pipes and other materials should be made by licensed engineers and local communities and should be based on the unique nature of individual water systems. Additional factors must be considered such as seismic resilience, soil compatibility, maintenance and life cycle costs. Pipe material choice can have significant consequences for seismic resiliency. Water and wastewater utilities have invested millions of dollars to plan and prepare for seismic events and this legislation could undermine that investment of public dollars by forcing utilities to use pipe materials that are unsuitable for seismic and other conditions.

ORWARN is neutral about which materials utilities select for their projects, but opposes this legislation based on the negative effect it would have on the ability of utilities and design professionals to choose the best materials to serve their customers and protect public investment in clean and safe water.

ORWARN respectfully urges your opposition of HB 4043. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Chris Wanner  
ORWARN Chair