



600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
oregonmetro.gov

February 25, 2021

Senator Kayse Jama, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Jama and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Metro Council, we are pleased to support SB 622, which provides \$10 million in lottery bond funding to support critical flood safety improvements through the Levee Grants Program.

As you know, Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area. Together with local government and community organizations, we have been actively engaged in efforts to address the flood safety issues related to the Columbia River levee system along the Columbia Corridor in urban Multnomah County. We serve on the PEN 1 Board and the Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District and participate in the Levee Ready Columbia partnership. These organizations and partnerships have all collaboratively focused on how to meet federal levee requirements and create a strong and functioning system. By passing SB 431 (2019), the Legislature put in place a new management system that will also identify a long-term revenue solution, and we are working with the US Army Corp of Engineers on a study which could lead to federal assistance.

While efforts are under way locally and federally to bring the levee system up to date, state assistance is also needed. Fixing and maintaining the levee system will protect significant assets that serve not just our region but the entire state. The levees protect the Portland International Airport, the Oregon Air National Guard, Oregon's second largest water supply source and 48,000 jobs producing \$16 billion of economic activity. In addition, there are 7,400 residents living behind the levees, including many vulnerable populations, as well as important wildlife habitat in need of restoration. All of this requires a functioning and strong levee system, and state investment is crucial to help local communities make the necessary repairs.

While Metro is most aware of the needs of the Columbia River levees, we also know that our region's needs mirror those in other communities across the state. SB 622 provides a critical funding source to support levee systems statewide and provide vital flood protection throughout Oregon.



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In conclusion, we urge the 2021 Legislature to adopt SB 622 and allocate \$10 million to the Levee Grants Program.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Peterson".

Lynn Peterson
Metro Council President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley R. Craddick".

Shirley Craddick
Metro Council, District 1 (includes
eastern portion of Columbia River
levees); Urban Flood Safety and Water
Quality District Interim Board Member

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Nolan".

Mary Nolan
Metro Council, District 5 (includes
western portion of Columbia River
levees)