



February 16, 2023

Honorable Chair Ken Helm
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
900 Court St.
Salem, OR 97301

Chairs Helm, Vice-Chair Hartman and Owens, and Members of the Committee:

Tualatin Valley Water District (TVWD) serves approximately 225,000 customers in Washington County, Oregon. Our service area covers more than 44 square miles including portions of Beaverton, Hillsboro, Tigard, and unincorporated Washington County. TVWD's mission is to provide our community safe drinking water and quality service.

As members of this Committee are aware, Harmful algal blooms (HABs) occur when cyanobacteria begin to grow rapidly and produce toxic compounds, called cyanotoxins. HABs outbreaks have become increasingly problematic over the years and pose a threat to human and animal health, water quality, and the economy. A HABs Workgroup was convened in 2019 by Chair Helm and other members of this Committee to recommend legislation after repeated HABs events across the state, including the 2017 HABs outbreak that significantly impacted our state capital. TVWD actively participated in the Workgroup and are appreciative of the Legislature's commitment to this issue.

We are supportive of all efforts aimed at addressing the ongoing risk of HABs, including HB 2647 which declares HABs a threat to public health and welfare. The measure also directs the Oregon Health Authority and the Department of Environmental Quality to develop and maintain a coordinated response strategy to address HABs, as well as identify water sources that are susceptible to HABs. The language in this bill reflects that this issue needs a comprehensive approach to fully address the public health implications HABs have on Oregonians.

In 2021, the Legislature funded millions of dollars in water infrastructure projects around the state, many of which will be integral to the state's future response on water issues like HABs. Investments at this frequency and scale will be needed as our state continues to deal with climate change and an ongoing water crisis.

Sincerely,

Joel Cary
TVWD Water Resources Manager