

February 27, 2024

House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for SB 1517A – Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, Vice-Chair Tran, and Committee Members:

Thank you for your consideration of SB 1517A, a crucial bill to ensure we can support the operations of the Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District. The Senate passed SB 1517A with a broad bipartisan vote earlier this session, and I urge the committee to send this bill to the floor of the House of Representatives with a 'do pass' recommendation.

Every year, there is a 10 percent chance of a major flood along the lower Columbia River in Multnomah County, and the risk only grows as climate change and rising sea levels continue to impact river conditions. The river's flood plain area not only includes the Portland International Airport and Oregon's second largest source of drinking water, but it is also home to nearly 8,000 residents and 2,500 businesses that generate at least 59,000 jobs and \$16 billion in annual economic activity and associated revenue for the State.

In 2019, the Oregon State Legislature passed Senate Bill 431, creating the Urban Flood Safety & Water Quality District (UFSWQD), a new special district to manage the levees, pump stations, and conveyances that reduce the risk of flooding along the Columbia River in northern Multnomah County. Passing SB 1517A is the critical next step we must take to modernize this important infrastructure, improve flood safety for an area critical to the region's future, and take a more holistic approach to the management of this historic floodplain. SB 1517A will provide the district with fair and sustainable ways to pay for ongoing operations and capital improvements.

The Oregon Legislature's support of the UFSWQD is fundamental to helping the district protect people and property from flooding, prepare for climate change, and contribute to the health of the river and the watershed.

I urge your support for SB 1517A.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori Stegmann".

Commissioner Lori Stegmann

District 4, Multnomah County Board of Commissioners

Submitted by Tom Powers