

March 20, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Senate Bill 714, Issuance of lottery bonds to fund Columbia Corridor flood safety projects**

Chair Golden and Members of the Committee,

The Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District (the District) operates a flood safety system—levees, pumps, and conveyance—that keep Oregonians safe from flooding and allows for one of the state’s economic generators to flourish. While the District has been vigilant in the operation and maintenance of the system, capital investments are needed to protect lives, jobs, and the environment. Please support the resiliency of Oregonian’s lives and livelihoods in the Columbia Corridor of Multnomah County by supporting SB 714.

State investment is needed in the flood safety system protecting critical infrastructure and a statewide employment center. The area protected by the flood safety system is vital to the state’s resiliency and strategic concerns. This includes safe operations of three interstate highways, state income generated by tens of thousands of jobs, and public facilities such as Portland International Airport that serve statewide needs.

A package of nearly \$300 million of capital work is needed to improve the levee system. This include \$150 million approved by the voters of Multnomah County and \$100 million from the federal government. To complete the list of needed improvements to the flood safety system, the coalition supporting this work is seeking an allocation of \$20 million in lottery funds during the 2025-2027 biennium and another \$25 million in the 2027-2029 biennium through the issuance of lottery bonds to fund the Columbia Corridor flood safety projects.

This funding is needed so the District can make necessary improvements to the infrastructure to meet federal safety standards and unlock more than \$100 million of federal funding. The funding completes the capital package identified by engineering studies conducted with the US Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA as necessary to bring the flood safety system up to federal safety standards. State investment demonstrates to the federal government that our state remains committed to protecting Oregonians from flooding. State support reflects a funding package leveraged at the local, regional, state, and federal levels to upgrade and improve the flood safety system and better positions our federally cost-shared projects.

The District was created by the Oregon Legislature in 2019. The creation of the new district recognized the need to increase flood safety, prepare for climate change, advance natural floodplain restoration, contribute to water quality, embed equity in flood safety operations, and celebrate the diverse cultural history of the managed floodplain. Major floods are increasing with climate change and this century-old system requires capital improvements. Major floods would cost lives and homes, damage the natural environment, and affect tens of thousands of jobs behind the managed floodplain.



**Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District**  
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Flood risk along the Columbia River in greater Portland is real and growing. With climate change, the risk profile is increasing. With changes to operations of the Columbia River, upstream storage is less predictable. With increasing atmospheric river rain events, the heart of our manufacturing and warehouse sectors face internal and external flood risk. Extreme weather events and historic floods are happening around the world. It is only a matter of time until the Portland region experiences such an event. State investment is needed to prepare for the inevitable.

The greater Portland-Columbia River flood safety system provides a vital service to the state's economy and to the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands of Oregonians. The system protects the state's largest business and industrial zone, and 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. This flood safety system also protects three interstate highways (I-5, I-205, and I-84), two major rail lines, the Oregon Food Bank, an Air National Guard Base, State and County Correctional Facilities, to name a few. The managed floodplain is an economic engine for the entire state. That economic generator relies on the flood safety system to thrive.

The work those employees do contributes to Oregon's economic competitiveness, brings tax funds to the state, and provides an economic multiplier effect contributing to the vitality of the neighborhoods and cities where those employees live.

Thank you for your ongoing support for the flood safety district and for your consideration of this important request. With additional capital funds from the State, the District will be able to deliver the flood safety needed by the community to be better prepared for an uncertain future. Please support SB 714.

Sincerely,

  
Jim Middaugh (Mar 20, 2025 14:38 PDT)

Jim Middaugh

Executive Director  
Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District



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Final Audit Report

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