



February 3, 2026

Co-chair Leiber and Sanchez, and members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

For the record, my name is David Feldman and I'm a Senior Permit Writer working at the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input as you move along the ways and means process relating to the budget reduction exercise the agencies presented to you last year. I want to highlight the importance of the Water Quality Permit program and the devastating impact any reductions would have on the citizens of the state of Oregon.

I'm part of a team of highly trained professionals that draft permits that allow everything from cities, towns to industries to discharge wastewater to waters in Oregon. These permits can be complex due to shifting regulations, and requests from the permittees to make certain that they receive a fair permit that allows them to operate under state and federal rules. My group is also responsible for enforcement of these permits. We take great care to make certain that discharge permits requirements are clear, and unambiguous to the permittees and the public.

As you are probably aware, there are several proposed bills that are meant to speed up or "streamline" permitting processes in Oregon. Water quality permits are very complex, and take time to draft to ensure that waters in Oregon are protected and useful for the people of Oregon. I encourage you to make certain that funding is maintained and maybe increased for DEQ to meet the new requirements included in the proposed bills. This will allow us the ability to hire knowledgeable people who are qualified to make complex decisions in a timely manner and complete the permits in a timely manner. Please maintain or increase the DEQ budget so that we can continue the hard work to protect Oregon's waters.

I am a voter from Oregon District 50 represented by Ricki Ruiz and I'm here today to speak for the thousands of people we serve. Passing a cuts only budget this session without keeping the most impacted at the center of the decision making process will have extreme consequences. They are your neighbors, your friends, family, and most importantly, your constituents. I urge you to strongly consider using reserves to keep families afloat and spend more time thinking about making strategic decisions for the next few years.

With respect,

David L. Feldman
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