3 April 2013

Oregon Ways & Means Committee

Natural Resources Subcommittee Co-Chairs

Senator Chris Edwards & Representative Ben Unger

State Capitol

Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Edwards and Representative Unger:

>   Submitted electronically to: ORiellP@leg.state.or.us
>
>   *Regarding – DEQ Budget Bill – SB 5520*

The **Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies** is a private, not for profit organization of Oregon's wastewater treatment and stormwater management agencies, along with associated professionals. Our 127 statewide members are focused on protecting and enhancing Oregon's water quality.

The **League of Oregon Cities** is an association of all 242 cities in Oregon. Oregon's cities are home to seventy percent of all Oregonians and eighty percent of the state's jobs and income tax collections.

The **Special Districts Association of Oregon** (SDAO) was formed in 1979 to provide a broad range of membership services to special service districts located throughout the state of Oregon. SDAO represents approximately 950 local governments of varying sizes and functions throughout the state. Member districts include some 28 different types of districts, including sanitary districts and sanitary authorities.

Our organizations support the DEQ budget bill, and wanted to highlight a few items included in Policy Option Packages that are important to the collaborative clean water partnership between Oregon's local governments and DEQ.   The priority Policy & Restoration packages for our members include:

- ***Integrated Water Resources Strategy Implementation*** – We support the Integrated Water Resources Strategy Implementation as an important planning tool to ensure Oregonians have adequate water supplies in the future to support municipal, agricultural, and business needs.
- ***Statewide Groundwater Monitoring Program*** – Information on the quality of groundwater and pro-active programs to reduce groundwater pollution protects groundwater for future use.

- ***Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Collaboration*** – Pesticide Stewardship Partnership programs have demonstrated that high quality information provided to growers and producers, in partnership with technical assistance from Oregon State University and Extension Agents, reduce pesticides in Oregon's rivers and streams. Pesticide collection events safely manage expired and unwanted pesticides. Pollution prevention is the most cost effective and most effective tool to reduce toxics from Oregon's rivers and streams.
- ***Restore and Maintain Onsite Septic System Program*** - The Oregon Onsite septic system program is a pro-active program designed to serve the needs of rural Oregonians while protecting groundwater and surface water runoff.
- ***Proposed Fee Increases for Wastewater System Operation Certification*** – Our members are required to ensure wastewater treatment plant operators are properly certified. Having this program operated by DEQ provides public accountability and ensures Oregon standards are consistent with national requirements.
- ***Analyst Adjustments*** – Restoring general fund FTEs in the Wastewater Permitting subprogram provides valuable services to our members in ensuring their discharge permits are accurate and also provides needed technical assistance. Our members strongly support restorations to the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program – updated, scientifically accurate TMDLs are critical to understanding the water quality improvements that will be needed to meet Oregon's water quality standards. Due to decisions in a federal court regarding Oregon's temperature standard, additional DEQ resources will be needed to properly update the Willamette temperature TMDL - - of critical importance to all communities and businesses along the River.

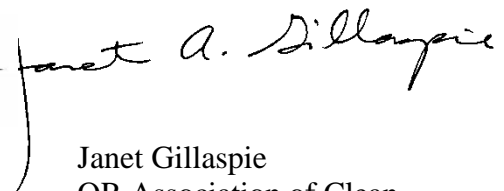We appreciate your review of our areas of support for the DEQ budget and its policy option packages.

Very Truly Yours,

Tracy Rutten

Tracy Rutten   Mark Landauer   Janet Gillaspie
League of Oregon Cities   Special Districts Association of Oregon   OR Association of Clean
                                                                                                       Water Agencies

cc: DEQ at aerne.melissa@deq.state.or.us