

# Willamette Water Supply

*Our Reliable Water*

February 27, 2017

**Via email and regular mail**

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair  
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Willamette Water Supply Program to urge your support of SB 382.

WWSP is a partnership between Tualatin Valley Water District and the City of Hillsboro to bring Willamette River Water to the homes and businesses of Washington County. The new water delivery system will be completed in 2026 at a cost of approximately \$1.3 billion.

The cost of WWSP will be shouldered entirely by local ratepayers, who deserve the highest value for their money. Currently ORS 279C requires that public agencies use Qualification Based Selection (QBS) “when selecting consultants to provide architectural, engineering, photogrammetric mapping, transportation planning or land surveying services.” This requirement prohibits contracting agencies from using cost as part of the contractor selection process, leaving the issue to negotiation only after a contractor is chosen. While the intent of this provision in public law is to assure that only qualified contractors are retained, I believe it unintentionally places an unproductive burden on public agencies as we seek to gain the highest value from relatively small public infrastructure investments.

SB 382 will provide public agencies with greater flexibility during the bidding process for projects valued at less than \$500,000. SB 382 does not suspend or in any way alter the responsibility to select only highly qualified contractors using QBS evaluations, whether below or above the proposed threshold. It will, however, allow a contracting agency to compare costs of qualified bidders before making a final contractor selection for projects with a value of less than \$500,000. This approach has multiple advantages to the Oregonians and the agencies that serve them. It will give the procuring agency an early sense of the market value of the desired work and allows the contracting process to be streamlined for projects that fall under the proposed threshold. This will save agencies time, the public money, and allow projects to get out the door faster.

SB 382, as amended, preserves QBS practices for larger projects while allowing greater flexibility to public agencies when contracting relatively small infrastructure projects. Passage of SB 382 would be a welcome addition to public contracting law.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Mark Knudson, P.E.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Tualatin Valley Water District