

**Testimony on Senate Bill 445**  
**Jon Blasher, Parks and Nature Department Director**  
**Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources**  
**February 28, 2019**



Chair Dembrow and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 445 in its current form and to express support for the Oregon Invasive Species Council and its important work.

The Oregon Invasive Species Council is a leader and partner in maintaining clean water and healthy habitat in the Metro region and across the state. In 2017 and 2018, OISC's Emergency Control Account was essential to contain and control an outbreak of Japanese beetles in Washington County. If established, this insect would cause severe damage to Oregon agriculture, home and business landscaping and natural areas. The Japanese beetle eradication project demonstrates OISC's unique position in Oregon and its ability to respond quickly to urgent problems.

The OISC's Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) system gathers, compiles and distributes information about new invaders across the state. This statewide coordination provides more efficient response than would be possible by individual agencies and jurisdictions. Additional funding would extend the reach of this work and the requirement of a biennial report to the Legislature would increase transparency and accountability.

The Emergency Control Account is nearly exhausted, and SB 445 would replenish the fund for time-sensitive, critical early control work on severe threats. Oregon has no alternative for this rapid funding with the flexibility to be used anywhere in the state on any taxon (plant or animal) as needed.

Expanded membership on the OISC will provide for more robust representation across Oregon. The addition of a representative from Oregon Parks and Recreation Department as a voting member will also strengthen the Council.

Collaboration on invasive species such as emerald ash borer, Japanese beetle and garlic mustard might not occur without the encouragement, facilitation and expertise of OISC. Additional funding requested in SB 445 would maintain these efforts and provide resources for additional education and outreach, two essential components of invasive species work.

Metro urges you to pass SB 445. The region benefits directly and indirectly from the work of the OISC and we are pleased to support this bill and encourage its passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "JB", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jon Blasher, Director  
Metro Parks and Nature