



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 100-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 5, 2020

To: [Senate General Government and Emergency Preparedness](#)
[Senator Chuck Riley](#), Chair
[Senator Fred Girod](#), Vice Chair

Re: SB 1537 – Oregon’s Resiliency Going Forward – **Comments/Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that all levels of government share the responsibility of coordinating, implementing and funding an effective program to mitigate Oregon’s earthquake and tsunami hazards. Priority must be given to mitigation that protects human life and safeguards critical life support systems. This position was adopted in 1995 and we have consistently argued for both public education and government investments to address this critical public safety issue since that adoption.

In 2019, as in previous sessions, we engaged in the issue of dam safety (HB 2085), acknowledging the responsibility of government to evaluate dams “...that threaten population centers and taking remedial actions such as reinforcing dams, and developing maps and downstream notification procedures.” We are currently engaged with the Water Resources Department as they do rulemaking on that bill.

We find the entire bill to have merit. Funding of a tested Earthquake Early Warning System with Public System Outreach and Education, addressing a 2-week Ready Oregon program and updating the Oregon Resilience Plan and Coastal Plan all fit within the League’s position.

We have been actively involved in addressing dam safety issues, including our support of HB 2085 (2019) and are now serving on the rulemaking committee for that bill. Therefore, we specifically advocate for Section 12, Dam Safety. We support permanent funding of 2 engineers in the Water Resources Department to begin work on the risk assessment of the 76 high hazard dams currently identified. We understand that 20 may be in poor or unsatisfactory condition—a severe public safety issue. But we know that Oregon has about 950 dams scattered around the state and many have not been inspected since they were built—many more than 50 years ago. The funding for managing contractors, for flood assessments and creation of a body to help determine how to prioritize and fund repairs will help guide future requests. We encourage your support for this General Fund request.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concern about this important public safety issue.

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

Peggy Lynch
LWVOR Natural Resources Coordinator

Cc: [Senator Betsy Johnson](#)
[Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward](#)
[Representative Dan Rayfield](#)
[Mike Harryman](#), State Resilience Officer
[Tom Byler](#), Director, Water Resources Dept.