



Mingus Mapps, Commissioner  
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March 23, 2021

Representative Ken Helm, Chair  
House Water Committee  
900 Court Street NE, HR E  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: HB 2470 – Well Construction Standards and Enforcement**

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2470. The City of Portland supports a robust well construction program that results in timely inspections and protects groundwater resources and public health. The City supports the efforts to address this issue, like what is captured with HB 2145, but we have concerns regarding the proposed approach in HB 2470.

The Columbia South Shore Well Field, which is located along the Columbia River and spans from just west of the I-205 bridge in the west to Troutdale in the east, is a drinking water source for over 800,000 Oregonians. The Cities of Portland, Gresham and Fairview have implemented a groundwater protection program to protect the Columbia South Shore Well Field from contamination. The core of this collaborative resource protection strategy is the prevention of groundwater degradation through managing both current risks and legacy situations. Grandfathered, non-conforming facilities pose a substantial risk to groundwater, including drinking water sources.

In addition to local wellhead protection regulations, Portland relies on the authority of the Water Resources Department (WRD) to compel action in situations where groundwater is impacted or at risk because existing wells do not meet protective standards for construction. HB 2470 would place the burden of remediating such wells on the well owners, without considering the responsibility of well installers for correcting potential errors, and creating a barrier to effective groundwater protection.

A statute of limitations on WRD's enforcement authority will not address the underlying issue of the lack of resources in the agency's well construction program. Limiting WRD's enforcement authority to three years will not address older, potentially higher risk wells, and could ultimately result in less scrutiny of legacy risks.

The City of Portland is committed to the protection of groundwater resources and welcomes further conversations to work toward a solution to this issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

*Gabriel Solmer*

Gabriel Solmer  
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City of Portland