



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-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.

March 29, 2021

To: [House Committee On Energy and Environment](#)
Rep. Pam Marsh, Chair
Rep. Ken Helm and Rep. David Brock Smith, Vice Chairs

Re: **HB 2657** – DEQ 60-day permit processing – **Opposed without funding**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon has extensive positions on water quality and quantity. We have studied water issues since 1969. We are actively engaged in the water quality programs of the Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to assure the Clean Water Act is implemented. We served on the “Blue Ribbon Committee” and as a member of the stakeholders group helping to develop and advocate for the **2015 Budget Note** around finding solutions to wastewater permits. We followed up by participating with the contractor during their work. They have provided the department and this legislature with **a path to a solution** to this extremely important public health AND economic issue.

The department has taken those recommendations and has provided the legislature with a path to success. Each budget year the League advocates for investing in the improvements needed to get permits processed by providing technical assistance staff as well as additional permit writers to implement their new 10-year plan. The department has reorganized and has added some staff—within legislative budget constraints. It is important that permits be processed with appropriate data and under both EPA and DEQ rules and guidelines. Until the funding issue is addressed, it is unreasonable to expect the department to meet the 60-day processing deadline proposed in this legislation.

The League also follows the other divisions of DEQ, including Air and Land Quality. As with the example above, until the department is adequately funded for both data collection and permit processing, it is unreasonable to expect the department to meet the proposed processing deadline. Requiring the Environmental Quality Commission to consider each permit that is over the 60-day time limit is unreasonable. Decisions on permits are given to the agency under rules developed and adopted by the Commission after extensive rulemaking and public processes. These permits are about the public health and safety of Oregonians.

We ask that you not pass this legislation, but instead help us advocate for full funding for the DEQ Air, Water and Land Quality Divisions. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca L. Gladstone".

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Lynch".

Peggy Lynch
LWVOR Natural Resources Coordinator