



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 31, 2021

To: [House Committee on Energy and Environment](#)
Representative Pam Marsh, Chair

Re: [HB 3269](#) – directing Department of Environmental Quality to study and develop strategies to fund department's emergency response program – **Support**

Since the 1950's, the League of Women Voters has been at the forefront of national efforts to protect air, land and water resources. The League works to "Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment" with a focus on demanding pollution prevention. Not all polluting events can be prevented. Once such a disaster occurs, it demands response.

The Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Emergency Response Program's role in protecting people, fish and wildlife, and the environment around pertinent events extends across the spectrum from prevention to immediate response to cleanup and recovery. The incidents to which the emergency sector within the agency responds tend to be largely accidents or acts of nature and can defy prevention or advance planning. Handling whatever events bring requires time, resources, coordination activities, and other efforts across a vast, and predictable continuum. The stakes of doing it right are often extremely high. Lacking a GF allocation since its elimination as a budget cut in 1997, whatever work is needed is currently being funded by various fees and cost recovery mechanisms.

The fact that the agency's 10.5 staff performs its important roles in response to over 1,500 spill incidents per year by itself warrants support for this bill. And spills are only one type of event they confront.

HB 3269 calls for a rational approach to a clear need: it directs DEQ to develop a strategy that better meets the needs of doing their job and report to the Legislature. Incidents that call for emergency response attention cannot be expected to do anything but increase in the face of weather events and other conditions related to climate change that are becoming more extreme.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation and **we urge you to support HB 3269.**

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

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley Weathers".

Shirley Weathers
LWVOR Hazardous Materials Portfolio