



From The Desk of Chris Gorsek

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE., Salem, OR 97301- 503-986-1449

February 2, 2022

Representative
Senator

RE: Support for HB 4067 – Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District

Dear Colleague:

In 2019, the Oregon State Legislature passed Senate Bill 431, creating the Urban Flood Safety & Water Quality District (UFSWQD), a new special district to manage the levees, pump stations, and conveyances that reduce the risk of flooding along the Columbia River in northern Multnomah County – an area that each of us represent. The legislation was introduced at the request of Levee Ready Columbia, a regional partnership of public, private, and nonprofit organizations working collaboratively to modernize this infrastructure and the way it is managed.

SB 431 recognized the importance of the area protected by the levee system to the state economy. The area not only includes the Portland International Airport and Oregon's second largest source of drinking water, it is also home to nearly 8,000 residents and 2,500 businesses that generate at least 59,000 jobs and \$16 billion in annual economic activity and associated revenue for the State.

The passage of that measure (now ORS Chapter 550) was foundational to putting a more modern, environmentally friendly, and financially sustainable governance structure in place to protect people and property from flooding, prepare for climate change, and contribute to the health of the river and the watershed.

As the Initial Board has begun its efforts to stand up the district and identify a revenue structure to pay for ongoing operations and capital improvements, several ambiguities and sequencing issues have been identified in the statute. HB 4067 seeks to address the ambiguities to help speed up the creation of a revenue structure for the district and accelerate transition to a single, more modern, and sustainable district capable of meeting the region's flood safety and climate resilience needs.

The Metro-area residents and businesses in the Columbia River floodplain are relying on us to continue to protect their lives and livelihoods. The State's ongoing support for the new



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governance structure and protecting this vital area is critical to our collective interests in this area.

Senator Chris Gorsek

Senator Lew Frederick

Representative Zach Hudson

Representative Travis Nelson