
February 1, 2022

House Veterans and Emergency Management Committee
900 Court Street NE, Room 347
Salem, Oregon 97301

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

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Lewis and Meek:

Every year, there is a 10 percent chance of a major flood along the lower Columbia River in Multnomah County, and the risk only grows as climate change and rising sea levels continue to impact river conditions. This 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.

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. The legislation was introduced at the request of Levee Ready Columbia, a regional partnership of public, private, and nonprofit organizations of which we are a member.

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 improvements have been identified for ease of implementation. HB 4067 makes the changes necessary for the creation of a revenue structure for the district and it accelerates the transition to a single, more modern, and sustainable district capable of meeting the region's flood safety and climate resilience needs.

Passing HB 4067 is the critical next step we must take to modernize this important infrastructure, improve flood safety for an area critical to the region's future, and take a more holistic approach to the management of this historic floodplain. I encourage your support for HB 4067.

Sincerely,

Taylor Steenblock

State and Regional Affairs Coordinator, Multnomah County Government Relations