

**Testimony of Anneliese Koehler, State and Regional Affairs Advisor
In Support of House Bill 4067
Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
February 22, 2022**



Metro Council is pleased to support House Bill 4067 which provides important technical amendments to SB 431 (2019) to facilitate an accelerated and critical solution for protecting our levee system along the Columbia River.

Metro is the elected, regional government of the Portland metropolitan area. Together with local government and community organizations, we have been actively engaged in efforts to address flood safety issues related to the Columbia River levee system along the Columbia Corridor in urban Multnomah County. We serve on the PEN 1 Board and the Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District and participate in the Levee Ready Columbia partnership. These organizations and partnerships have been a collaborative effort to focus on meeting federal levee requirements and creating a strong and functioning system.. By passing SB 431 (2019), the Legislature put in place a new management system that will also identify a long-term revenue solution, and we are working with the US Army Corp of Engineers on a study which could lead to federal assistance.

As the initial Board has begun to stand up the new district and identify a long-term revenue solution, they have been confronted with several ambiguities and sequencing issues. HB 4067 seeks to resolve these technical concerns and facilitate a speedy and successful process to standing up the new district and ultimately address our significant flood risk.

Fixing and maintaining the levee system will protect significant assets that serve our region as well as the entire state. The levees protect the Portland International Airport, the Oregon Air National Guard, Oregon's second largest water supply source and 48,000 jobs producing \$16 billion of economic activity. In addition, there are 7,400 residents living behind the levees, including many vulnerable populations, as well as important wildlife habitat in need of restoration. All of this requires a functioning and strong levee system, and this bill will allow us to continue this important and critical work to ensure the functionality and longevity of the levee, region and state.

In conclusion, we urge the 2021 Legislature to adopt HB 4067. Thank you for your consideration.