

TRAVIS NELSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 44
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Testimony in Support of House Bill 2726

Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Sanchez, Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith and other members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans.

My name is Travis Nelson and I am the State Representative for House District 44 - North and Northeast Portland and I am here today to urge your support for HB 2726. This is a funding bill for the Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District. This district, created by the Oregon Legislature in 2019, manages a critical flood protection system of levees and pump stations that safeguard the greater Portland region. However, this century-old system is aging, and with climate change increasing the frequency and severity of major flood events, urgent improvements are needed. This is a very important issue to my district, and I am passionate to bring it to light.

The threat is real. My district bears the history of one of Oregon's worst flood disasters—the 1948 Vanport Flood—when a levee failure unleashed a torrent of water that destroyed an entire city within minutes. More than 18,000 people lost their homes. We cannot allow history to repeat itself. Major floods would cost lives and homes, damage the natural environment and affect tens of thousands of jobs behind the managed floodplain.

The flood safety system does not just protect local businesses and residents but also safeguards critical state-owned infrastructure that is essential to all Oregonians. This includes the I-5 bridge, the Glenn Jackson Bridge, and major highways like I-5, I-205, and I-84, which serve as lifelines for commerce, emergency response, and daily travel across the state. A major flood event would not only be catastrophic for North Portland but would also have far reaching consequences for the entire region.

This is why state investment is not just necessary but essential. Bringing this infrastructure up to federal safety standards will protect invaluable state assets, ensure the security of nearly 60,000 workers, support 2,500 businesses, and safeguard the homes of 8,000 residents within the managed floodplain. Investing now means preventing future devastation, saving lives, and preserving economic stability for generations to come.

I strongly urge you to prioritize this investment. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Travis Nelson'.

State Representative Travis Nelson
House District 44, North/NE Portland