



March 5, 2025

House Committee on  
Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for House Bill 3314

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

We urge your support for House Bill 3314. The bill will allocate critical funding to address the persistent threat of toxic cyanobacteria blooms that begin in the Ross Island Lagoon. The health of the lower Willamette River, the stretch that flows through downtown Portland, is tied to the lagoon. Failure to solve this issue will doom the river to repeated outbreaks of toxic cyanobacteria, which will close the river to recreation, harm wildlife, and put human and pet health at risk.

Over recent years, toxic cyanobacteria blooms emanating from the Ross Island Lagoon have threatened water quality and, in turn, people's relationship to the river. Multnomah County has had to regularly warn people from recreating or allowing their pets in the river due to these blooms. As summer and river temperatures warm due to global heating, the issue of toxic cyanobacteria will only worsen absent a sustained solution. The funding legislated in this bill will support a science-based solution to address the source of blooms: a lack of water circulation in the man-made lagoon.

Adding water circulation to the lagoon will also be good for salmon. Water quality conditions in the lagoon are currently not suitable for the salmon that might make it into the lagoon during the spring and summer. The water is alkaline (pH>9), temperatures are hotter than the river (regularly >23 C), and the algae likely produce low oxygen conditions at night which can harm salmon. A solution to this problem is urgent. This bill will help to set the stage for the ecological recovery of the lower Willamette River.

The funding in the bill would also support project management from the Human Access Project (HAP). Few organizations will deliver the same return on investment as the Human Access Project (HAP). HAP has a unique ability to bring diverse stakeholders together to find and build solutions. Their tenacious, yet inspiring and fun approach enables them to navigate the morass of bureaucratic hurdles, overcome obstacles, and make what seems impossible possible.

Finally, the County's enthusiasm for initiating a science-based solution for toxic cyanobacteria blooms has included financial support. In the current fiscal year, the Board of County Commissioners has allocated \$150,000 to develop initial engineering for a mixing channel. We urge your support in passing HB 3314.

Sincerely,

John Wasiutynski  
Office of Sustainability  
Director

JR Lilly  
Office of Government Relations  
Tribal Relations Liaison

*Submitted by Tom Powers, Multnomah County (503) 348-2021 tom.powers@multco.us*