

To: Chair Nguyen; Vice-Chair Diehl; Vice-Chair Isadore; Members of the House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business & Trade

From: Tracy Rainey, Clean Water Services (raineyt@cleanwaterservices.org)

Date: March 12, 2025

RE: Support for HB 3246 with the -3 amendment

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3246 with the -3 amendment.

Clean Water Services is a local government and public utility that provides sanitary sewer and stormwater services to over 600,000 residents and businesses within urbanized portions of Washington County, including within 12 cities. We own, operate and maintain over 1400 miles of sanitary sewer line, 43 pump stations and 4 water resource recovery facilities that treat wastewater to near drinking water standards.

The infrastructure and services that we provide are driven by our National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, more commonly known as a NPDES permit. This permit is required by the federal Clean Water Act and establishes specific water quality standards and criteria that we must meet. Our water resource recovery facilities discharge treated water into the Tualatin River which is a smaller and slower moving waterbody. As a result, the river requires both a high level of wastewater treatment and innovative approaches in order to meet water quality standards. Some of the most challenging water quality standards that we currently must meet are for temperature and nutrients.

HB 3246 will further promote innovative solutions that seek to turn waste products into valuable resources. We have included examples below of some of the innovative approaches that we have deployed at Clean Water Services. HB 3246 is important as there is more that can be done both specific to our utility operations and on a statewide basis for other utilities and communities. In addition, the bill with the -3 amendment, clarifies the ability for county service districts to generate revenues necessary to ensure that these projects are financially feasible.

Nutrient Recovery:

In 2009, Clean Water Services' Durham Water Resource Recovery Facility (Tigard) became the first in the United States to recover fertilizer using the Ostara struvite recovery system. In 2012, Clean Water Services opened the world's largest municipal nutrient recovery facility at its Rock Creek Water Resource Recovery Facility (Hillsboro).

Ostara Nutrient Recovery Technologies Inc. developed a technology that simplifies the treatment process by directly removing phosphorus and ammonia from wastewater. Traditional methods involve

sending water through multiple cycles, which increases operating costs and takes up capacity while also forming struvite that can coat pipes, valves and other equipment. Instead this proprietary technology, called the PEARL™ process, diverts the phosphorus and other nutrients to a reactor that converts them into a premium, slow-release, environmentally friendly commercial fertilizer called Crystal Green®.

Benefits

- Pollution reduction and reduced greenhouse gas emissions through reduced energy usage
- Reduced chemical use
- Revenue generation from the sale of Crystal Green® fertilizer
- Increased water resource recovery facility reliability and capacity
- Reduced operations and maintenance costs
- Generation of carbon credits

Energy Generation:

Cleaning used water is an energy-intensive process. To manage our operating costs and reduce the environmental impact of our energy use, Clean Water Services has an active energy efficiency program. We also generate much of our own energy from renewable sources. Through partnerships with the Energy Trust of Oregon and Oregon Department of Energy, we produce enough energy to power the equivalent of 400 homes per year. Clean Water Services generates more than 21 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, which meets about 45% of facility electricity needs and offsets about 70% of the natural gas needed for heating.

Digester Gas: Methane gas is created during the anaerobic breakdown of organic material in the wastewater treatment process. Although excess gas is burned in flares, we use most of it to produce energy in cogeneration systems at our Rock Creek and Durham facilities. The cogeneration system produces electricity and hot water for process and space heating in our treatment facilities.

Cogeneration: Through cogeneration — the generation of electricity and other energy jointly— we meet 30% of the electrical energy needs at our Rock Creek facility and about 60% of the electrical energy needs at our Durham facility. Energy production at the Durham facility is enhanced using more than 150,000 gallons of fats, oils, and grease (FOG) delivered weekly from local restaurants. FOG, also known as “brown grease,” is cleaned out of restaurant grease traps and interceptors at regular intervals. In the past, this significant energy source was disposed of in landfills, but it is increasingly being used as feedstock to produce energy. The addition of FOG has doubled the amount of digester gas produced at Durham.

In addition, through partnerships with certain food and beverage producers, we have also been able to further bolster our energy generation. By taking certain food waste products and using that waste as a feedstock for our digester, we can produce additional biogas that can be captured and converted to produce energy.

Water Reuse:

Clean Water Services produces approximately 68 million gallons of clean water every day. We are committed to ensuring this water is put to its best use to meet and balance our region's long-term needs. Cleaned to near drinking water standards, much of the water is returned to the Tualatin River, but we reuse some of it for irrigation of golf courses, parks, and schools, and for wetland plants and ecological restoration. Cleaning water for its specific use saves energy and chemicals, and can help our communities be more resilient and our water supply more stable as we adapt to a changing climate and growing population.

Again, we thank you for your consideration of HB 3246 with the -3 amendment. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or additional information that we can provide.