

Emerson Levy
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
House District 53



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 13th, 2025

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Levy and Gamba, Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Emerson Levy, and I am the State Representative for House District 53, representing much of central Oregon. I am speaking today to share my strong support for House Bill 3107, which seeks to modernize and streamline regulatory processes managed by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). This is not a new process. It's been on the books for almost three decades. It just lacks clarity and structure, and that's what we are trying to get right with this bill.

Our economy in Central Oregon lives on a balance between natural resources, our industries, and the communities that call our beautiful region home. As one of the quickest growing regions, it is critical that our regulatory processes are as transparent, efficient, and responsive as possible. We all know that regulatory processes can be slow and burdensome, leading to delays that impact businesses, our local governments, and other stakeholders who are just trying to foster growth in our communities while complying with environmental standards.

By giving DEQ the authority to enter into agreements with regulated entities to expedite or enhance regulatory processes when needed, our businesses and organizations can look forward to more timely approvals and decisions that are crucial to moving forward in projects. We hope this is something that actually helps the department, by giving them the tools and factors to use in determining whether an agreement for an expedited permit process makes sense for a given project.

I want to make it clear that in no way is this intended to impact existing DEQ permitting staffing. There have been recent fee increases to raise more money to hire more permit writers and get through the queue of permits and that isn't going to change, we support DEQ having the staff needed to do their work.

This is simply trying to create an avenue for certain applicants, when it fits, particularly when there are economic development benefits to the state, to utilize supplemental help in getting through the process faster, while still adhering to all environmental laws and giving DEQ staff final approval over whether to issue the permit.

The DEQ team has been very collaborative and constructive in working with us on this concept and while there are a few sections of the bill that need more work, we think we are close to something that will be mutually beneficial to the department and permit applicants. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Levy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "E" being large and prominent.

Emerson Levy

State Representative, House District 53