



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

April 16, 2025

To: Co-Chairs [Sen. Lew Frederick](#) and [Rep. Emerson Levy](#) and Members of the [Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources](#)

Re: **[SB 5520](#) – Dept of Environmental Quality Budget – Support with Comments**

The League of Women Voters has strong positions on both water quality and quantity, as well as air quality, solid waste, and hazardous waste. **We also believe it is past time to address the existential threats of our time: our changing climate and injustice around disadvantaged communities.**

LWVUS was active in encouraging passage of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts and continues to advocate to protect that foundational work. We also advocate for federal funding to implement that legislation, an issue of grave concern today. In Oregon, League members have studied these issues, recognizing the value of having clean air, clean water, and land for public health for today and generations to come. With that background, we provide testimony on DEQ's proposed budget.

We support the General Fund, Lottery Fund, and fees for the base budget/activities of the department. The General Funds in this budget, as well as permit fees, protect Oregonians' health and support our economy. Increased investment is necessary to reflect the agency responsibilities.

We also support the POPs requested by the Governor and note a few specifically, as well as some from the ARB that were not included. We are concerned with the Reductions List and, not only the known federal revenue shortfalls currently funding water quality positions, but the potential for additional losses yet unknown that might cripple programs and make Oregonians less safe.

POP 111: Updates the fee structure to sustain Oregon's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program.

POP 170: Not included in the Governor's budget but addresses critical resource gaps noted in the Secretary of State's audit: laboratory, emergency preparedness and response, communication and outreach, compliance and enforcement, water quality as well as climate change programming.

There are a number of fee increase requests, especially in the water quality program. Without those fee increases to at least maintain the current service levels, water quality in Oregon could be at risk as permits need to be reviewed accurately and enforced timely.

POP 120: Fee increases in Onsite, 401 Dredge and Fill, Wastewater Operator Certifications and Underground Injection Control.

POP 123: Should the legislature decide to go forward with the pilot program sought by the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries, this position is critical to assure appropriate oversight related to water quality.

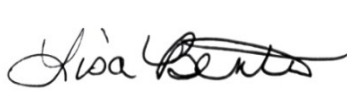
POP 500: As the League works with others to support increased housing production, these three new positions are meant to provide technical assistance for high priority housing production projects that require water quality permitting.

POP 140: As the agency grows and is responsible for Oregon's air, land, and water quality and safety, Central Services needs to grow as well, critical for the day-to-day operations of the agency, including security in their IT systems.

POP 142/182/192: You were treated to pictures and descriptions of our aging laboratory equipment. Without up-to-date equipment, DEQ cannot accurately measure and inform DEQ's programs nor Oregonians' concerns.

DEQ is at the core of Oregon's public health and environmental protection as well as our economic well-being. Investing in its many responsibilities is money well spent.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation. **We encourage your support for the many missions of this important agency.**



Lisa Bentson
President LWVOR



Peggy Lynch
Natural Resources Coordinator



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Climate Emergency Coordinator

Cc: [Leah Feldon](#), Dept of Environmental Quality Director