



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old 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 18, 2017

To: Ways and Means Co-Chairs Senator Richard Devlin and Representative Nancy Nathanson  
Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee Co-Chairs Senator Lew Frederick and  
Representative Brad Witt

Re: Natural Resources Agency Budgets – **Comments**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon has engaged in discussions around state fiscal policy and taxes since the 1960s. We have provided testimony this session on most of the natural resource agency budgets after having engaged with these agencies for a number of years, including work again after the 2015 legislative session. It is with this lens we ask that you consider the following:

In our testimonies (available on OLIS) we have consistently asked that you look at these budgets as a collective and not in silos. Work done by one agency can affect the work of others. Data gathered by one agency is used by others. One example of this need for coordination is continuing work on implementation of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The Strategy was developed not only by the Water Resources Department, but the Dept. of Environmental Quality, the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and the Dept. of Agriculture as lead agencies, along with Forestry, the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries, the Drinking Water Advisory Committee of the Oregon Health Authority, the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development, Parks and Recreation, the State Marine Board, the Sustainability Board, the Watershed Enhancement Board, the Dept. of State Lands, the Oregon Business Development Dept. and a number of federal agencies.

In 2015, the Legislature placed a Budget Note on the DEQ budget to find solutions to wastewater permitting. Instead of supporting that work, we are seeing cuts to that program. We understand the need to address Air Quality, but it would be a shame to see that wastewater permitting work go unfunded after receiving professional advice.

The Water Resources Dept. is asking for monies to continue Place-based Planning, yet the staffing in the DEQ budget to work with those community efforts is on the cuts list. The same is true related to DEQ and groundwater studies.

In order for any water storage projects to move forward, the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife needs their streamflow biologists and a couple of those positions are not currently in their budget. And the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development will need staffing to help local jurisdictions address any storage projects.

The Dept. of Agriculture needs to continue work on its Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program and Water Quality Program to assure both our groundwater and surface water is protected. The Dept. of Forestry needs to continue work on protecting riparian areas. And the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries is critical to providing data for these agencies. The Dept. of State Lands needs to continue to protect Oregon's waters and wetlands.

Linked to these agency budgets are the Oregon Health Authority budget around drinking water standards and testing and the Oregon Business Development Department's Infrastructure Authority to provide dollars for water and wastewater upgrades or replacements.

Lastly, we are among the Oregon voices hoping that the Governor can come up with a plan to keep the Elliott State Forest in public hands. It's unclear what resources will be needed to assure that happens.

We understand the lack of General Funds for education, public safety, human services and health care. And we have provided testimony on many of those budgets. We are ready to work with you and others to find additional revenue to fund these services. But we need to ask that, as you make decisions on these natural resource agency budgets, you consider them as a collective and not in silos and be sure our air, land and water is protected for future generations.

Thank you for considering our comments.



Norman Turrill  
LWVOR President



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