

Testimony for UFSWQD Budget Committee meeting April 17, 2025 and TSCC Commissioners for their budget law compliance review

I have been involved with drainage district boards as a board supervisor and represented (Peninsula District #2) on the Levee Ready Columbia committee from the entire time it took to develop the UFSWQD. I served on the interim board of the UFSWQD until the current board was elected. I was a strong advocate for my neighbors both private landowners and businesses. I testified at state hearings and Portland City Council in support of the formation of UFSWQD to support the needed work to maintain and improve the Columbia River Levee. I am the executive director of the Vanport Placemaking Project whose mission is to preserve the important history of Vanport that was destroyed in the Columbia River Flood of 1948. Very little was done to preserve that history for 75 years until this project started. You can read about it on our website: www.vanportplaces.org. I served as the chair of the East Columbia Neighborhood for 9 years. I served on the City's Development Review Advisory Committee which dealt with permitting for development in our neighborhood facing flood zone challenges, and Marine Drive along the Columbia River for business development.

- I have a strong concern that the status of USAC funding, the basis for the GO Bond, appears to be in jeopardy given the recent Federal staff layoffs and budget cuts and extension of the Federal budget for 6 months. You should be concerned about the stability of those funds given the Federal Budget has not been approved for the FY. 2024-2025
- There are excessive salaries in the budget. The salary for the UFSWQD Executive Director is more than the amount of the combined salaries of the Oregon Governor, Secretary of State and State Treasurer. Their salaries are reported on the state's website to verify.
- For 3 years there has been no success to obtaining a steady stream of revenue beyond "we're working on it". Current funding that was obtained with the dissolution of the 4 Legacy Districts will run out and not be ample for the proposed staff and CIP projects that includes purchasing new equipment. Some is replacement but some is new to the district. How was all the maintenance work done prior to the CIP proposed purchase of equipment?
- Is there a business continuity plan in the case of reduced funding?
- HB 2693 and HB 2726 were recently introduced by Rep. Zach Hudson and passed. They have been referred to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means for discussion but are not on that committee's agenda to be heard as the committee has a full schedule until May. The bills are not on the May regular session agenda for consideration. These bills request that Oregonians vote to approve constitutional amendments that determine the categories of programs that may receive Oregon Lottery funds. Fund Education, State Parks, Natural Resources (Watershed Enhancement), Economic Development, Veterans' Services, Outdoor Schools and Problem Gambling Treatment. I am strongly opposed to these bills as they reduce funding to voter approved funding – 53% goes to educational support. If the bills are referred to the voters it would be costly and lengthy .
- How will the State and City budget cuts affect the loans and agreements that are reliant on UFSWQD obtaining other funding for match?

- I am deeply concerned about the disproportionate amount private landowners will be charged vs public landowners like Metro, Cities, Multnomah County and Port of Portland.
- What is the plan if a flood or natural disaster occurs prior to the stated actual work proposed to start on 2027? How is UFSWQD aligned with the Portland Hazard Management Plan? There is no mention of UFSWQD in their proposed plan.
- Staff has used the term “natural resource” for the Columbia River levee. USACE defines a levee on their website as: ”not considered a natural resource by the USACE. While natural levees can form through geological processes, man-made levees are engineered structures designed to control water flow and reduce flood risk. The USACE's role is to help design, build, maintain, and modify these man-made levees as part of its Levee Safety Program.

Thank you for your service in helping us all be safe. My hope is you will find a way to have a more fiscally responsible budget than the current one and ask the difficult questions needed to get there. Feel free to contact me for further questions or discussion

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• HB 2693 and HB 2726 were recently introduced by Rep. Zach Hudson and passed. This bill may have a revenue impact or an impact on the tax policy of this state or local governments. This statement is for the purpose of moving the bill to another committee. A full revenue impact analysis will be conducted as the bill is considered in the Ways and Means committee. Neither bill is not on that committee's agendas to be heard as the committee has a full schedule until May. The bills are not on the May regular session agenda for consideration. These bills request that a process be developed to create a process to allocate lottery funds to the UFSWQD. Oregonians vote to approve constitutional amendments that determine the categories of programs that may receive Oregon Lottery funds. They fund Education, State Parks, Natural Resources (Watershed Enhancement), Economic Development, Veterans' Services, Outdoor Schools and Problem Gambling Treatment. I am strongly opposed to these bills as they reduce funding to voter approved funding – 53% goes to educational support. If the bills are referred to the ballot it would be costly and lengthy.