



AFSCME Supports SB 5521 — The DEQ Budget Bill

Right up front, we'd like to address a huge misconception about the 2009-11 Department of Environmental Quality budget. The misconception is that this agency budget has seen "large" or even "huge" growth.

In fact, what growth there is in the DEQ budget simply represents new 2009 federal stimulus funds for Oregon. Because of the federal dollars, we will see funding for these community projects:

- State Revolving Fund — \$44.3 million
- Diesel Emission Reduction Act — \$3 million
- Leaking Underground Storage Tanks — 2.7 million
- Water quality Planning — 0.45 million

**FROM THE DESK OF
RICK METSGER
OREGON STATE SENATOR**

In fact, overall 48 percent of this budget will fund loans to Oregon communities for clean water projects (wastewater systems) and debt service on related bonds.

These "national funds" are found in the federal funds and "other funds" (non-limited) accounts. "Other funds" are increasing to support the state contractor costs for the electronic waste recycling program and more federal pass-through dollars from DHS.

Otherwise, minus the federal stimulus dollars, this budget includes a General Fund reduction of 16 percent and over 18 FTE.

We note that without clean air and clean water, Oregonians will see increased incidence of asthma, increased health costs and increased sick leave. These are bad for individuals and for business.

One topic that surfaced during the DEQ budget discussion again this year — as it does seemingly every year — is whether Oregon should return delegation of various federal programs to EPA to save money in Oregon. We believe that maintaining federal programs at the state level is in the best interest of all Oregonians. We've heard testimony in many previous sessions from people and businesses that would not be considered likely DEQ supporters that, in fact, they do appreciate and understand that they can "work with" the DEQ as a home, in-state agency. You don't "work with" the EPA; the EPA simply dictates what you will do.

We encourage your "Yes" vote on the DEQ budget. This agency is vital to the quality of life in Oregon.