

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Doug Drake and I am an aquatic biologist and a 22-year veteran of DEQ and I speak today as an AFSCME member and past president. During my time at DEQ I have traveled throughout the state collecting water quality data, developed policy, and am currently implementing the water quality protection program for the Willamette River at our Northwest Region.

Water quality protection in this country has improved as our ability to detect chemicals and understand vital ecological relationships has evolved. At DEQ we have worked to apply these lessons to do the best possible job of protecting Oregon's aquatic resources. While we are on top of the problem with respect to point sources (pollution that comes from pipes), we are just now making headway on non-point source pollution. This is pollution associated with urban runoff, agricultural run-off and the habitat loss as a result of land use. Non-point source pollution is, by far, the biggest threat to water quality in the state!

DEQ has responded to this threat. We have developed strategies and programs to protect drinking water aquifers and to manage stormwater across the state. We have implemented a toxic monitoring program, and a network of basin coordinators to help implement all the management plans that come with these new programs. The workforce reduction option that was presented to you this week has 32 water quality positions eliminated, 32 individuals. What does this number really mean? It means that the following kind of work will not get done:

- Critical technical assistance, outreach, education and coordination will not happen in watersheds like the Clackamas, Deschutes, Molalla, Pudding, Santiam, Umpqua, and Yamhill. It means the kind of success we have had in the Tillamook, Bear Creek, and the Tualatin basins will take longer and will be much harder to achieve.
- Monitoring in support of the Oregon Plan and for toxic contaminants will vanish. Without timely and relevant biological and chemical data we will not know where the problems are or if any of the new management activities we are asking stakeholders to do are working or not.
- Finally, the relationships we have established with our watershed partners will be broken. This is an area where we are just beginning to see the dividends. Whether it is watershed councils, small towns, big cities, counties, soil and water conservation districts, industry, environmental groups, or tribes; we are seeing the awareness, enthusiasm, expertise and energy growing, especially when it comes to non-point source. These partners are all getting on the same page because DEQ is there making it happen. This is the real investment the state will be losing with the proposed cuts.

This work is funded not by permit fees but by the lottery or general funds. That means it is on the chopping block when it comes time to cut the budget. This situation ties DEQ's hands. We are obliged to cut our most important and effective programs – those dealing with the biggest pollution problems – because they don't have safe funding sources. Abandoning these programs will result in degraded drinking water, streams that can't support healthy fish, and lakes and rivers that are unsafe for recreation. It also means a loss of investment and

progress already made. The proposed cuts will severely limit our ability to address our number one water quality threat: non-point source runoff, especially from urban stormwater and agricultural fields.

Please remember that a healthy environment is not a luxury. Our natural resources are the foundation for jobs and an important source of Oregon's cultural identity. If we truly want what the Governor has called a "green and sustainable" economy please remember it is DEQ's job to insure those words mean something.

Thank you for your time!