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April 22, 2009

The Honorable Margaret Carter, Co-Chair Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Peter Buckley, Co-Chair Ways and Means Committee
900 Court Street NE, S-201
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Letter of support for DEQ budget for 2009 – 2011 biennium

Dear Senator Carter and Representative Buckley:

The Columbia River Gorge Commission strongly supports DEQ's work with our agency and with others around the state. There are multiple priorities for the State of Oregon, and I believe that DEQ provides necessary services for the health and safety of our population and resources.

Below are just a few projects that DEQ has been involved with in the Columbia Gorge:

1. DEQ has been conducting an eight-year study to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the emission sources that contribute to haze in the Gorge, determining future haze trends, and is developing a path forward for continued visibility improvement in the Gorge.
2. DEQ has been monitoring and will continue to monitor air pollution levels in the Gorge. Monitoring data indicates air quality in the Gorge meets all federal air quality health standards.
3. DEQ has engaged the National Policy Consensus Center to form a bi-state collaborative to specifically address diesel emissions of freight transport in the Columbia River area. This effort brings together representatives from rail, waterway, trucking, and the port industry. The group has already identified projects to apply for DERA (Diesel Emissions Reduction Act) funding, by reducing emissions from cargo handling equipment. The collaborative will continue to identify opportunities for new non-regulatory middle and long-term diesel emission reduction projects.
4. DEQ works closely with a number of communities to address woodsmoke and open burning emissions. Past efforts have included a public education and outreach effort in The Dalles by providing updated educational brochures in English and Spanish on proper woodburning and open burning use. In addition, DEQ worked with the local community on a voluntary woodstove curtailment program.

I urge continued support for the budget of the Department of Environmental Quality. Dick Pedersen's strong leadership and collaborative efforts have benefited the Gorge Commission, other agencies, and the citizens of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Jill Arens
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Vicki Walker, Co-Chair Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee
The Honorable Bob Jenson, Co-Chair Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee
Paul Siebert, Legislative Fiscal Office
✓ Dick Pedersen, Director Oregon Department of Environmental Quality