

From: Connie Steele [mailto:csteele@oregonwireless.net]

Sent: Wednesday, May 06, 2009 11:47 AM

To: RAINEY Justen; VICKIWALKER Sen; MARGARETCARTER Sen; PEDERSEN Dick; SIEBERT Paul R; KUCINSKI Michael; GREGSMITH Rep

Subject: DEQ

We are Steele's Septic Tank Service in La Grande, Or. We previously wrote an e-mail regarding the DEQ program being drastically cut and how it would affect our business, our community and the economy on the east side of the state. As you know the unemployment rate on the east side of the state has skyrocketed due to losing jobs at the trailer manufacturers and Boise Cascade. Please don't devastate the area even more by lack of funding for the DEQ.

We attended the legislature meeting Pendleton a few weeks ago with the intent to be able to speak. Unfortunately, there were too many people to allow everyone to speak. There were many people speaking regarding public health issues, education issues and National Guard cuts. I am emailing you again to reiterate our position about the DEQ funding. We are a small family owned business and employ 5 full time and 2-3 part time employees who support their families. We are not the only company that installs septic systems on the east side. We work from start to finish with installing septic systems and cannot do this without the DEQ staff that are presently employed. There are currently 1.25 staff members to do Site Evaluations, permits, inspections and they have been given four additional counties in the last few months. We are currently waiting approx. 3 – 5 weeks for site evaluations and with the proposed cuts **(which will only leave us with .50 staff to perform all the duties, sites, permits and inspections)** we will be waiting approx. 8 -10 weeks. That does not include the actual issuance of a septic permit. **YOU CANNOT OBTAIN A BUILDING PERMIT WITHOUT A DEQ SEPTIC PERMIT.** This process will now take approx. 10 – 12 weeks before someone can obtain a building permit and get started with building their house. We only have an opportunity of 5 – 6 months for actual work on the east side because of weather. Without funding for the DEQ the east side will suffer further unemployment. When someone cannot obtain a building permit in a timely manner, it hampers the entire process from septic installation to electricians to carpet layers and so on. The thought should be toward keeping people at their jobs or creating new ones to put people back to work, not further cuts and layoffs. We need to continue the process so we can all recover from this devastating time. Please do not cut the funding for DEQ and leave the 1.25 staff members we currently are dealing with. They do a great job with the time and area they are given and we value the service they provide. They are vital in continuing the construction industry and it will be absolutely devastating to our business and many other industries on this side of the state.

Shon & Connie Steele
Steele's Septic Tank Service
3704 Highway 30
La Grande, OR 97850
541-963-6380 – Phone
541-962-8728 – Fax