



Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

2024-2026 Performance Partnership Agreement Response to Comments

Response to comments

The Department of Environmental Quality accepted public comment on the draft [Performance Partnership Agreement](#) and Grant Application for State Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 (from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2026). The PPA describes how DEQ and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 will work together to protect Oregon's environment in relation to DEQ's implementation of federally delegated environmental programs. The two-year agreement documents the strategic goals, joint priorities, objectives and commitments of EPA and DEQ to protect Oregon's environment. The agreement also serves as the work plan for DEQ's federal Performance Partnership Grant from EPA. The agreement appendices contain program-specific work plans for air quality, hazardous waste and water quality. DEQ accepted public comment on the PPA from May 6, 2024 at 2 p.m. to May 20, 2024 at 5 p.m. DEQ received four public comments. DEQ appreciates all of the comments that were submitted.

Table A: Summary of comments and DEQ responses

Category	Comment Description	Response
Air Appendix	Do not use taxpayer funds to purchase electric cars.	The PPA and associated PPG funding does not provide funding towards electric vehicles. DEQ and EPA do not propose changes to the PPA based on this comment.
Water Appendix	Recreate a compliance recognition program.	The PPA and associated grant are to support the implementation of the Clean Water Act. It does not include funds to provide recognition for compliance. DEQ and EPA do not propose changes to the PPA based on this comment.
Water Appendix	Concerns over discharge; permitting that enables destruction of water/ habitat; and lack of testing and data transparency.	The PPA and associated PPG funding provides funding to continuing permitting efforts, data collection, and analysis. The draft 24-26 PPA has additional emphasis on data integrity as well as emphasis on environmental justice communities as associated with the PPG. The PPA does not enhance DEQ's authority. DEQ and EPA do not propose to the changes to the PPA based on this comment.
Water Appendix	Need for continued efforts to analyze and provide data regarding agricultural and industrial impacts on the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area.	DEQ will continue to work with interested partners including academia and communities to address the water concerns in the LUBGWMA. DEQ and EPA do not propose changes to the PPA based on this comment as it does not directly relate to the grant mechanisms for this workplan.

Contact

Morgan Schafer, morgan.schafer@deq.oregon.gov

Non-discrimination statement

DEQ does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age or sex in administration of its programs or activities. Visit DEQ's [Civil Rights and Environmental Justice page](#).

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From: [Cynt George](#)
To: [SCHAFER Morgan * DEQ](#); [boc](#); [EAGLESON Bradley * DEQ](#); [NOMURA RANEI * DEQ](#); [WALTZ David * DEQ](#)
Subject: Performance Partnership Agreement Public Comment
Date: Wednesday, May 8, 2024 4:43:36 PM

Performance Partnership Agreement

EPA

Key goals: • Set and implement environmental standards that are protective of all Oregonians and the air, water, and land resources that we all depend on.

Orgon DEQ

Improving Water Quality Clean water is critical to Oregon's environment, community public health, tribal nations' interests and to our economy. Protecting Oregon's rivers, lakes, streams, territorial sea, and groundwater quality keeps the state's waters safe for people, fish, and other uses. DEQ works with federal, state, tribal, local, and business partners on the overall water quality and ecosystem protection efforts. This includes both innovative and efficient grey and green wastewater infrastructure, and implementation of clean water plans.

As a lifelong Oregon Mother and Grandmother, it has been my nightmare to realize what little concern nor standards are set to protect the future children and habitat that depend on clean safe water. I live in the Mid Coastal watershed which contains some of the historically most productive Salmon habitat in this state along with hundreds of species both swimming and 4 legged who no longer have a habitat that can support life. As of this year our forest is being clear cut and sprayed by timber moguls like Weyerhaeuser taking every possible mature tree, many barely 20 yrs since the last round of toxic sprays affected the watersheds and the health of our communities. We also have one of the largest polluters with Georgia Pacific Paper Mill and its untested discharges from Juno which is washing our household garbage not only our unseperated garbage but trucking garbage in from other states and using our Salmon Habitat and Drinking water supply to the tune of atleast 11 million gallons a day. This toxic discharge water is then discharged off Newport Oregon Shore and right now is leaking closer than permitted as you should already know.

So that is the sad facts, you both permit the destruction of our air and waters and profit off those permits.

Now lets add each City who is also discharging under your permits, waste waters from the cities and the discharging of toxins into our waters from the water treatment plants. You have 20 years of written testimony from me on these issues and yet you have never done your job. Until you can give me scientific testing levels in our river sediments and shorelines for the exact toxins contained in your permitted discharge documents then we know nothing. Oh please add the pesticides and herbicides listed on notifications I receive on the FERN system.

Please add the last year alone letters sent in regards to this exact failure. My Email is goinggreenwest@gmail.com

Cynthia M. George

244 Pioneer Trail Toledo Or 97391

I could waste my time going over point by point but your already going to follow your agenda to spend funds without informing us with the truth as to our future waters and lands of Oregon.

From: [Ira Edwards](#)
To: Morgan.Schafer@state.or.us
Subject: PPA Comment
Date: Monday, May 6, 2024 3:48:50 PM

You don't often get email from imedwds@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Please do not waste taxpayer money on electric vehicles.

Ira Edwards
845 W. 12th St.
Medford, OR 97501

From: [Mark Walter](#)
To: Morgan.Schafer@state.or.us
Subject: PPA Comment
Date: Monday, May 6, 2024 2:54:44 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

You don't often get email from markw@waterdudesolutions.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

My comment is related to the Water Quality Program priorities.

I do not see any form of recognition for compliance. Many years ago, EPA and DEQ had given awards and recognized permitted for compliance. Now the only time permittees hear from regulators is when they are having compliance challenges. Often with no prior awareness of the noncompliance challenge. A recognition program can aid with compliance by the permittee's maintaining awareness of existing and changing requirements while they focus on maintaining positive recognition.

I have worked at several outstanding facilities recognized by the EPA National Clean Water Act Recognition Award program. The award motivated staff and helped garner stakeholder support for continued success. I.e. compliance.

It would be a benefit to the industry and the environment to bring back this important program.

Thank you,

Mark Walter, Senior O&M Specialist
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markw@waterdudesolutions.com
waterdudesolutions.com





Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
700 NE Multnomah St., Suite #600
Portland, Oregon 97232

May 20, 2024

Administrator Sixkiller and Director Feldon,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the EPA and DEQ Performance Partnership Agreement and Grant Application for State Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 (PPAG). We appreciate the PPAG's emphasis on science-based decision making, implementation of the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) Second Local Action Plan, and coordination with other state agencies working in the LUBGWMA.

Water for Eastern Oregon (H2OEO) is a non-profit coalition of businesses and community organizations in Morrow and Umatilla counties supporting efforts to provide clean drinking water to every household and resident. H2OEO is committed to supporting long-term efforts to reduce groundwater nitrate concentrations. We drive collaboration among businesses, government, and community organizations, and support the science to mitigate current impacts and restore groundwater.

The Northeast Oregon Water Association (NOWA) is a result based non-profit support organization to the natural resource-based economy of the Mid-Columbia region of Northeast Oregon. We represent solutions not special interests or industries for the benefit of all needs in our region. Our organization includes landowners of over 350,000 acres of the most highly productive, irrigated food producing farmland in the world, as well as the counties, cities, ports, special districts, and private businesses that generate and support our value-added agricultural output that now contributes over \$2 billion annually to the region and State of Oregon. A sustainable, drought and climate-change resilient, conjunctively managed water supply program is critical to sustainability of our region and the quality of life of all our current and future generations.



NOWA's water sustainability goals rest on fixing past over-appropriation issues to the regions many connected and disconnected aquifer systems and beginning to rebuild aquifers to meet drought and climate resiliency needs of the region for future generations. This has taken significant commitment and vision from the region to both reduce current impacts on the water systems while building the projects necessary to rebuild systems stressed by bad practices. Some of these same lessons learned from our water quantity efforts are relevant to the current issues the region faces with water quality.

Science is the foundation of many of the advances made in the agricultural sector over the last 50 years. From understanding crop nutrition and moisture needs, to developing technology that allows for precise moisture and nutrition application based on real-time monitoring, science has been the basis for ensuring every drop of water and unit of crop nutrition is being used effectively and in a manner protective of groundwater.

Science-based, efficient agricultural practices protect groundwater, reduce climate impacts from the production and transportation of commercially produced fertilizers, and lowers costs, especially combined with the reuse of industrial and other wastewater. Science and science-based agricultural practices are essential for realizing these benefits and proving these practices are protective of the environment.

An accurate, trusted, and scientifically defensible data set is also important for sound decision making around not just agriculture and industry issues but to better inform all contributors and possible solutions to the LUBGWMA. Oregon State University is currently performing third-party, peer-reviewed scientific research on the hydrogeology of the basin. Understanding the aquifer structure is essential to understanding what sources are contributing nitrates to groundwater, what concentrations are from historic nitrates, and what actions are effective in reducing concentrations.

Differing perspectives on the hydrogeology of the basin has been a historic sticking point for decades in the LUBGWMA. To date, no Oregon state agency with regulatory authority in the LUBGWMA is utilizing a peer reviewed, consolidated data set in either review of current and past trends or in pursuit of regulatory modifications. The work of an independent, third-party scientist to develop a peer-reviewed report on the



hydrogeology, approved through standards acceptable to academia, was identified as a top priority by a facilitator working with the LUBGWMA Committee in 2017. Support of this work and the continued funding of OSU's scientific work is essential for progress to be made in the basin. We believe that this work is critical to building trust in the data amongst all parties which will be critical to advancing the coordination & monitoring/data outputs of the PPAG.

While reducing groundwater nitrate concentrations is going to take time, there are immediate actions that can and should be taken. Now is not the time for business as usual amongst any of the contributors and stakeholders identified in the Second LUBGWMA Action Plan. Beyond the significant and impressive work the Oregon Health Authority has done to test domestic drinking water wells and provide filtration or alternative supplies of water, the LUBGWMA Second Action Plan outlines a number of actions and projects, across multiple land use categories, that can be implemented to address groundwater quality. These actions include developing best management practice certification programs, performing well and septic system inspections, identifying groundwater monitoring practices, and developing crop- and condition-specific BMPs. H2OEO is glad to see implementation of the Second Action Plan as a priority in the PPAG.

Finally, H2OEO appreciates the PPAG's prioritization of DEQ working with stakeholders and other state agencies in the basin. Improved inclusion of all interest groups in the basin and more transparent coordination between agencies and local government prior to agency actions and decisions is needed. The region that the LUBGWMA is located within has a rich history in collaboratively solving problems. The region has one of the most successful salmon reintroduction projects (the Umatilla Basin Project) ever coordinated between local, state, federal, and tribal interests. The region has one of the most robust groundwater restoration plans for recovering aquifers depleted over 80 years ago and is the first Oregon region to effectively develop a mitigation program for meeting Columbia River water demands while ensuring no impact to listed fish. We believe that state and federal coordination with regional stakeholders who have a history in solving complex problems of past decades can and should improve.



Addressing groundwater nitrate concentrations and protecting public health requires work from all sectors of the community — including public and private entities, businesses, and the community at large — along with state agencies and local government. Recognizing the importance of each of these sectors and building trust will be essential to groundwater quality in the basin. H2OEO has been engaging in the basin for over two years and will continue to work on groundwater quality. NOWA formed in 2012 and will continue its efforts to meet long-term groundwater sustainability goals.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has also been working in the basin for decades. They are the designated agricultural experts in state government and utilizing their experience and expertise is key to addressing groundwater quality. We look forward to seeing increased coordination with ODA by DEQ and increased involvement from ODA broadly in the LUBGWMA process.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft PPAG. Science-based decision making, implementing the Second Action Plan, and stakeholder engagement and agency coordination are essential to addressing groundwater quality in the Lower Umatilla Basin. Please do not hesitate to contact us regarding these comments or any issue on which we can assist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin Green".

Justin Green
Executive Director
Water for Eastern Oregon

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "J.R. Cook".

J.R. Cook
Director
Northeast Oregon Water Association



CC: Morgan Schafer, DEQ

Courtney Crowell, Office of Governor