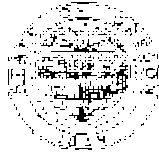


JOHN A. KITZHABER, M.D.
GOVERNOR



June 10, 1999

Interested Citizens:

I am pleased to present to you the State of Oregon's Portland Harbor Sediment Management Plan (PHSMP).

Preserving and improving the health of the Willamette River is important to all of us. For decades, the River has supported recreation, fishing, habitat for valuable fish and wildlife species, and a home for industries and navigation critical to Oregon's economic well being. As we learn more about the impacts of those activities on the Willamette, we face difficult issues -- how have we contaminated the shorelines, sediments, and water of the River? How can we foster beneficial uses and protect valuable environmental resources while still supporting vital Oregon industries? Great progress has been made in the past few years, but major challenges remain.

Today we must move immediately to address those issues in Portland Harbor, a 6-mile stretch of the Willamette River between Swan Island and the southern end of Sauvie Island, in the heart of Portland. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is overseeing investigation and cleanup of facilities along the shores of the Harbor, and has identified sediments in the Harbor that contain elevated levels of hazardous materials. This is not the only part of the River that needs attention, but it is a critical segment in the system. We need to better understand the contamination in the Harbor, to evaluate its risk to people and the environment, and to clean up the Harbor to make it safe for all Oregonians.

Oregon is committed to making that happen, and making it happen fast. For the past six months, the DEQ has led a cooperative effort with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), federal and state natural resource trustees, the Portland Harbor Group, expert consultants and scientists, and members of the community that I believe is unprecedented. Working with all of these parties, DEQ has prepared this plan to address Portland Harbor issues. The plan sets ambitious goals for Portland Harbor, and details the steps we need to take. It commits to stringent technical evaluations, full involvement of affected groups, a dedicated state regulatory and enforcement program, and the money needed to get the job done. The PHSMP also reflects my personal commitment to ensure that Portland Harbor receives the attention, resources, and accountability that it deserves.

The PHSMP has been developed through a collaborative approach, including a public comment process. Diverse groups such as Oregon's Congressional delegation, the state legislature, Native American tribes, neighborhood and environmental interest organizations dedicated to a healthy River, and local citizens have all been provided opportunities to share their vision of a PHSMP. Public involvement will continue to be a critical element as we move into implementation of the PHSMP. This plan reflects the best thinking, and the firm commitments, of all the parties who will be crucial in moving forward on Portland Harbor. The PHSMP is the State's commitment to properly addressing contaminated sediments in the Portland Harbor. Using state resources and authorities, DEQ will ensure that the Portland Harbor does not pose a threat to human health or the environment.

While the State of Oregon has and will continue to look to the EPA to list sites on the federal National Priorities List (NPL), the progress already made in developing the PHSMP DEQ's commitment to continue work in a timely manner, and the environmental progress being made at individual sites clearly indicate that a federal Superfund listing is not needed to achieve the desired environmental outcomes in Portland Harbor.

I share a respect and concern for the health of the Willamette River, and Portland Harbor, with all of you. Working together is the only way we can do what is needed to preserve this invaluable resource for future generations. Oregon is ready, and committed to success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Kitzhaber".

John Kitzhaber, M.D.