

Oregon Water Resources Commission Work Session

May 2, 1996

Pendleton, Oregon

Members

Cliff Bentz
Mike Jewett
John Frewing
Tyler Hansell
Anita Johnson
Ron Nelson

Others

Doug Myers
David Nelson
Todd Heidgerken
Karen Pearson
Kimberley Priestley
Rep. Chuck Norris
Roger Bachman
Michael Pelzer
Bob Hoeffel

Staff

Martha Pagel
Geoff Huntington
Steve Sanders
Diane Reynolds
Steve Applegate
Tom Paul
Fred Lissner
Mike Ladd
Kent Searles
Dave Jarrett
Tom Byler
Weston Becker

Agenda reports and other material submitted at this meeting are part of the meeting record and are on file at the Oregon Water Resources Department, 158 12th St. NE, Salem, Oregon 97310. Audiotapes of the meeting are on file at the same address.

Martha Pagel announced that Representative Chuck Norris was present at the work session. Representative Norris introduced David Nelson, a candidate for Senate District 29.

Preparation of 1997-1999 Budget and 1997 Legislative Proposals

Martha Pagel led this discussion with staff and the Commissioners. She distributed preliminary drafts of a department budget summary and legislative concepts, asking for Commission comments. Pagel said there will be a stakeholders meeting on May 17 to review these proposals with representatives of interest groups.

Proposed budget and legislation will be tied to the department's Strategic Plan and the Oregon Benchmarks.

Pagel reviewed the budget sheet line-by-line responding to comments and questions by Commissioners. She explained that the Base Budget allows the department to carry forward all of the existing permanent positions and on-going programs. The Option Packages would be funded from the Lottery Fund, General Fund, or some Other Fund such as fees. The Option Package section of the handout is divided into "Satisfy Existing Expectations" and "New Programs and Other Initiatives". The category "Satisfy Existing Expectations" is a listing of department responsibilities under existing laws. Under the "New Program" category are responsibilities requiring new legislation and funding.

Pagel said that in September the department will submit a budget request that will include option packages in priority order. All of the recommendations from state agencies will be reviewed by the Governor and prioritized. The result will be presented to the Legislature for consideration.

There is agreement among natural resource agencies that there is a real need for a dedicated funding source. The Governor's Office and natural resource agency directors are working toward this. In their base budgets and option package requests, agencies are communicating to the Legislature services are not being provided because of lack of funding. Hopefully by providing this information, a future funding source will be seriously considered.

Chair Bentz asked each Commissioner to state their funding priority under "Possible Option Packages." Nelson mentioned funding for processing transfers and GWEB; Jewett said the salmon initiative and more funding for conservation; Hansell said he would like to see more funding for field staff, and completing certificates and transfers; Johnson listed field staff, GWEB and the salmon initiative; Frewing said field staff; Bentz agreed with the need for more field staff and funding for information systems.

Commissioner Johnson asked Representative Norris if he would explain what his legislative priorities would be for the department. Norris said that reclaimed water and the issue of hydraulic connection would both be important to consider. He sees the importance of fees but realizes the subject is very unpopular with legislators' constituents. Hydroelectric project relicensing would also be a key issue.

The handout of potential 1997 legislative concepts included groundwater/well construction, instream flows, water right transfers, housekeeping, emergency water use authorization, fees, time-limited permits, reservations, reclaimed water, water quality/water quantity, and hydroelectric project relicensing.

Public Comment

Roger Bachman, Oregon Trout, said his organization appreciates the focus on the Coastal Coho situation but reminded Commissioners that there are other areas of concern. Oregon Trout is a co-petitioner for the listing of the Columbia River Steelhead. When that listing occurs, it will take more staff to manage the tributaries below the PGE project such as Trout Creek east of Madras. Oregon Trout would encourage a formal review by the department of the SB 674 rules and how they are operating. (tape 3, mark 126)

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned.


Diane K. Reynolds
Commission Assistant