



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 20, 2023

To: [Chair Golden](#), [Vice Chair Girod](#) and Members of the Committee

[Senate Committee on Natural Resources](#)

Email: snr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: [**SB 835 – Changes Sewer System Inspection Process – Concerns**](#)

The League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) has concerns about this bill because the League has multiple positions related to water quantity and quality: *"The League opposes degradation of all of Oregon's surface and ground water." "The League supports policies and legislation that integrate water quality into resource management and include but are not limited to standards for:Placement and inspection of septic tanks and alternative individual treatment systems,Permitting and enforcement procedures with agency funding adequate to ensure timely compliance,"*

The bill, as summarized and in the text, seems to require that DEQ or county public health, whichever is responsible for septic system permits, approve the use of the septic system currently used by the primary residence to also allow an accessory dwelling unit to be connected to the same system. While we have no opposition to the sharing of a system and drainfield (in fact that could be a good idea), it is important that said system be adequate for the increased volume of effluent and the system be in good working condition.

For a number of years, LWVOR has raised concerns regarding failing septic systems and has supported a grant and loan program for low-income homeowners so that said systems could be repaired or replaced. Because of the need for septic system replacements after the 2020 wildfires, we also supported help for those homeowners. However, both of those programs still require an inspection. This bill doesn't seem to require that critical inspection. Omitting this could jeopardize public health.

Summary: *Directs Environmental Quality Commission to adopt rules authorizing single-family dwelling and accessory dwelling unit constructed on same lot or parcel to be permanently connected to same subsurface sewage disposal system or alternative sewage disposal system.*

We ask that the committee consider and address our concerns should this bill move forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca L. Gladstone".

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Lynch".

Peggy Lynch
Natural Resources Coordinator