Dec. 7, 2023

Name & Address: Steven Miller, 1556 N. 20th St., Coos Bay, Oregon
RE: Joint Coo County and Cities (Coos Bay, North Bend) work session on proposed updates for the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public testimony as part of the Phase 1 updates to the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan.

Regarding Section 2.4 Committees Roles and Responsibilities

Noting the staff comment that the plan could specify the membership and the number of members on committees in a general way, with further details left to a Phase II update, may not ensure the desired broad representation of our communities on those committees. The more prescriptive approach where the number of members are set and the interests or expertise for the positions are also defined appears to better ensure the broad community representation desired.

Regarding the Joint Steering Committee

The draft plan assigns the County responsibility for appointing Joint Steering Committee members, including those from the two local tribal governments. The latest staff report notes the tribes were not even mentioned in the original CBEMP. The consultants helping with this update recommended one tribal representative from each of the tribal governments chosen by the County should be on the Steering Committee. But shouldn't the tribal governments be able to choose or appoint their own representatives to the Steering Committee? Another concern discussed in previous hearings and the last work session doesn't appear to have been addressed: There are still no specific details for how the tribes will be engaged in consultations as called for in planning documents.

Who should be the 9th member of the Joint Steering Committee?

In general, the 9th appointment to the Steering Committee should further broaden the Committee's representation of the community, its interests, and concerns. The broadest possible public engagement is recommended by all who are guiding and participating in this process.

Composition of the Coos Estuary Technical Advisory Committee

I generally support the list of 9 Committee members that has been proposed. It provides for a broad representation of technical expertise on the Technical Advisory Committee compared to the alternative offered, where its general language could more easily result in narrowing the range of expertise of its membership and the competence of its technical advice.

Composition of the Coos Estuary Citizens' Advisory Committee

As with the Technical Advisory Committee, I feel the broadest representation of citizens' interests and concerns around the Coos Bay Estuary should be sought. The fact that a diverse group of backgrounds totaling about 15 are listed in the prescribed composition of this committee is encouraging. There was also no specific limit placed on the Citizens Advisory Committee which appears to make room for added members which I hope would come from the County at large where many also have an interest in the Coos Bay Estuary.

A Needed Phase II Update Process

I urge Coos County and the cities along the bay to immediately begin planning for a Phase II Estuary Plan Update and seek funding to complete that demanding project. After nearly 40 years of time has elapsed since the original Plan took effect, an updated, fully complete Estuary Management Plan is due.

Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Steve Miller
Coos Bay