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June 28, 2023

To: Multnomah County Land Use Hearings Officer

RE: Portland Water Bureau Treatment Plant

I am speaking to express my strong disapproval of the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) trying to take **PRIME** farmland to site their water filtration plant. The land they are planning to take is some of the finest farmland in the east Multnomah County area, specifically around Carpenter Lane, Dodge Park Blvd., and Lusted Rd. I am not sure if the land is zoned EFU or MUA but placing a 90–100-acre industrial plant on either of these zonings would never be acceptable in any other case. This would create a strong precedence for future developments trying to encroach on farmland.

My property is owned by my wife and I as Shelley L. Ekstrom, LLC and is located between Dodge Park Blvd. and Lusted Rd. at 33304 SE Lusted Rd., Tax lot1S4E 21A 5L00900, Acct #994210630. This land is farmed in nursery stock by Ekstrom & Schmidt Nursery, LLC and is our most productive farm.

The Portland Water Bureau plans to place 5 ½' pipes on the eastern property line of the property. This would take a 65-100' wide parcel of land and run the length of the property, taking about 4 acres of prime farmland out of production. This equates to 38,000 to 40,000 carbon sequestering plants per year with a value of about \$250,000 to \$300,000 per year. At the NE property corner where the property connects to Lusted Rd., the Portland Water Bureau wants to locate a valving station (the intertie) that would require a large

**Exhibit
H.5**

building and an additional acre of land. This would be roughly 5 acres of land in total that is at risk of being taken out of productive farming. Also, the additional land that would have to be sacrificed as a spray buffer would increase the acreage that would be lost forever.

The Portland Water Bureau communicated to us that they will replace the layers of soil exactly how they are now, so the land will not be harmed. Anyone with the slightest bit of soil or geological knowledge knows that is not possible, especially a farmer. A test pit was dug this spring in the valving station area. The pit was 12'-15' deep and 6' wide. After the soil was replaced exactly as it was (LOL) much of the soil from the bottom of the pit is still on the surface. If they cannot replace the soil correctly in a small area, how do they expect to do it on a ditch that is 2300' long and 50' wide and 10-25' deep. This will destroy the productivity of the soil for many years to come. There is a tremendous difference in topsoil and the base clay layers of soil regarding the ability to grow trees.

My family has farmed in this area for over 100 years. My Grandfather and his sons cleared a 20 acre farm on Powell Valley Rd. for a subsistence farm in the past. My Dad built that farm into a productive nursery in the early 1960's and it is still a very productive farm today.

I have farmed in this area for over 40 years and farmed over the existing Portland Water Bureau pipelines on several different properties where the old pipes were laid in the 1930's. The soil and plant growth has never been the same as the natural undisturbed soil. I'm not sure whether it is the changes of the interface between the layers of soil or the compaction from equipment or a combination of both issues. The production of the soil in terms of plant growth is not the same. We are talking about nursery trees and shrubs with a high value and high demand for the finest soils. In addition, there is the issue of uncovering old weed seeds that have been buried for years. Bringing them up

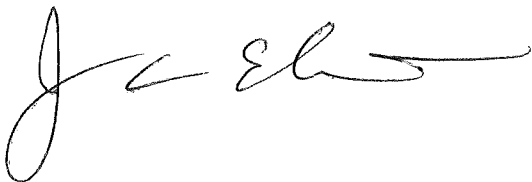
to the surface allows them to come back to life (Horsetail Rush in particular). Horsetail rush is next to impossible to kill and is considered a very noxious weed. This will create a big problem for shipping plants in Oregon and around the nation.

We have 7 different field locations in the area and that requires us to have tractors, both big and small on the roads constantly. We also have crew buses and trucks that travel daily from field to field to move product and people. I know that construction truck drivers are not the most patient drivers. With the added truck trips for a project this size (estimated in the 10's of thousands), there will be problems on the roads. This will force us to change many of our farm practices from how we plant and harvest our trees, to spraying and watering our trees and keeping our crews safe as we move them from field to field.

I know one of the purposes of the Land Use Board has been to protect farm land from commercial encroachment in rural areas like this. I hope the Planning Commission will preserve the valuable farm land we have left in East Multnomah County. This will provide the highest value and quality of life to all county residents.

Please keep up your mission and reject the Portland Water Bureau's application for a permit and keep them from destroying our farmland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Ekstrom', with a stylized, cursive script.

James Ekstrom

Shelley L. Ekstrom, LLC