

April 15, 2025

To the Hearings Officer, Multnomah County Remand Hearing:

My name is Pat Meyer, and I am a resident of the community near Cottrell Road, Oregon, where my family and our ancestors have lived for over 100 years. Our home is located just three doors down from the ongoing construction site of the proposed 95-acre water filtration plant. I speak today not only as a concerned citizen, but as someone who has directly witnessed the environmental devastation this project has already begun to cause—and who fears for the permanent consequences it will have on our region if this permit is approved.

We live at the headwaters of Johnson Creek, a vital tributary that supports a rich and sensitive ecosystem. **Over the years, this waterway has sustained generations of salmon, reptilian aquatic life, river otters, and a wide array of other native species. It has also supported a thriving natural corridor where deer, bear and elk would migrate each year, and where we have long observed birds of prey, including a spotted owl that had made its home in a pine tree on our property for years. That owl is no longer here. Neither are the bald eagles which regularly could be seen in our skies.** The half century old trees in which they resided and rested are now gone, cut down to accommodate the impending traffic anticipated for the construction and use of the proposed water filtration plant.



Since the construction began on the filtration plant our community has witnessed a disturbing and heartbreaking disappearance of the wildlife that once defined our surroundings. The massive volumes of approved stormwater runoff from the construction site now regularly flow directly into the Johnson Creek headwaters. This runoff carries with it sediment, chemicals, elevated temperatures, and unnatural flow patterns that are fundamentally altering the habitat. The fact that this runoff was "approved" does not make it safe—it demonstrates a **failure in environmental enforcement**. Our community was assured this project would be sustainable, that the Portland Water Bureau wanted to be "good neighbors" yet we are witnessing the opposite. If this permit is approved, it will set a dangerous precedent, allowing industrial development to **override legally protected habitats** without accountability.

The effects of this construction are immediate and severe. Salmon spawning grounds are being smothered and destabilized. River otters, reptiles and amphibians that depend on calm, clean waters for breeding are now exposed to fluctuating conditions, pollutants, and habitat loss. Our ecosystem is collapsing in real time, and the species that once relied on its seasonal rhythms are no longer returning.

A 95-acre industrial facility, regardless of its purpose, is fundamentally incompatible with the fragile nature of a headwater environment. The scale alone guarantees a permanent disruption of natural patterns. Furthermore, the plant's ongoing use of chemicals for water treatment, though regulated, introduces a level of risk that this habitat simply cannot absorb. These chemicals, combined with the accelerated runoff and landscape alteration, create conditions incompatible with the survival of sensitive wildlife species.

RE: Pat Meyer Testimony, Remand Hearing

Approving this permit would not just legalize a threat to our natural resources—it would sanction a permanent and likely irreversible transformation of a once-thriving ecosystem. We have laws— the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and Oregon state environmental regulations—that are meant to prevent precisely this kind of degradation. The long-term implications extend far beyond our immediate community. Johnson Creek feeds into larger watersheds that impact fish populations across the region. The loss of biodiversity here will have ripple effects on ecosystems, water quality, and species conservation efforts throughout the state.

I urge this board to reconsider the full environmental cost of this project. We must weigh this permit not only in terms of infrastructure, but in terms of what it will cost future generations in lost habitat, degraded water systems, and weakened biodiversity. Once gone, these natural resources cannot be reclaimed. Other, less environmentally invasive options are available, as the Portland Water Bureau is fully aware of.

Please, do not allow this project to proceed. Our environment, our wildlife, and our community deserve better.

Thank you for your time and serious consideration.

Sincerely,
Pat Meyer
Resident of Cottrell Road, Oregon
Johnson Creek Headwaters Community
[Written with the assistance of AI]

Citations:

Geographic Context: Johnson Creek Headwaters at Cottrell Road

- **Location:** The headwaters of Johnson Creek are situated near Cottrell Road in Clackamas County, Oregon. This area marks the origin of the creek, which flows westward for approximately 26 miles before joining the Willamette River in Milwaukie. [Portland.gov+1Oregon Geological Society+1](#)
- **USGS Monitoring Site:** The U.S. Geological Survey maintains a monitoring station at the headwaters, designated as site number 452731122174600. This site provides data on stream conditions, including flow rates and water quality parameters. [USGS Water Data](#)

Impact on Aquatic Life: Salmon Spawning Grounds

- **Salmon Species:** Johnson Creek supports populations of Chinook and coho salmon, both of which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. These species rely on clean, cool, and well-oxygenated waters for spawning.
- **Habitat Degradation:** Construction activities and associated stormwater runoff can introduce sediments and pollutants into the creek, smothering salmon eggs and reducing habitat quality. Elevated water temperatures from runoff can also be detrimental to salmon survival.

Disruption of River Otter Habitats

- **Habitat Requirements:** North American river otters inhabit clean rivers, lakes, and wetlands. They are sensitive to water pollution and habitat disturbance. [Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)
- **Local Presence:** River otters have been observed within the Johnson Creek watershed, indicating suitable habitat conditions prior to recent disturbances. [JCWC Facebook post](#)

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Decline of Northern Spotted Owl Populations

- **Species Status:** The Northern Spotted Owl is federally listed as a threatened species. It requires mature and old-growth forests with complex structures for nesting and roosting. [Bird Alliance Oregon](#)

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- **Local Observations:** The disappearance of a long-resident spotted owl from your property suggests habitat disruption, potentially due to nearby construction activities.

Interference with Deer Migration Patterns

- **Migration Corridors:** Mule deer in Oregon utilize established migration corridors to move between seasonal habitats. Disruption of these corridors through development can impede migration and reduce population viability. [US Forest Service+14Data.gov - Data.gov Dataset+14ODFW+14](#)
- **Local Impact:** The absence of the annual deer migration near your residence may indicate that construction activities are obstructing traditional movement paths.

Concerns Regarding Chemical Use and Water Quality

- **Filtration Process:** The sand filtration plant is expected to use various chemicals for water treatment. There is a risk that these chemicals could enter the creek through runoff, especially during heavy rainfall or system malfunctions. [Columbia Insight](#)
- **Potential Contaminants:** Chemicals commonly used in water treatment, such as chlorine and alum, can be harmful to aquatic life if they enter natural waterways. Their presence can lead to decreased oxygen levels and toxicity for fish and invertebrates.

Maps and Visual Resources

- **Johnson Creek Watershed Map:** The City of Portland provides detailed maps of the Johnson Creek watershed, illustrating the creek's course, tributaries, and surrounding land use. [Portland.gov](#) [Portland.gov](#)
- **USGS Monitoring Location:** The U.S. Geological Survey offers interactive maps and data for monitoring site 452731122174600 at the creek's headwaters. [USGS Water Data](#) [USGS Water Data](#)

Supporting Documents and Further Reading

- **Environmental Impact Concerns:** An article discussing potential environmental impacts of the Portland Water Bureau's filtration plant highlights risks such as siltation and chemical contamination of streams. [Columbia Insight](#) [Columbia Insight](#)
- **Salmon Surveys:** The Johnson Creek Watershed Council conducts annual salmon surveys to monitor populations and habitat conditions. [jwc.org](#) [jwc.org+1jwc.org+1](#)
- **River Otter Information:** The Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife provides information on river otter habitats and their sensitivity to environmental changes. [Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)
- **Northern Spotted Owl Profile:** The Bird Alliance of Oregon offers detailed information on the Northern Spotted Owl, including habitat requirements and conservation status. [Bird Alliance Oregon](#)
- **Mule Deer Migration Data:** The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Mule Deer Management Plan includes data on migration patterns and the impacts of habitat disruption. [ODFW](#)

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LUP Hearings <lup-hearings@multco.us>

Remand Hearing Testimony

1 message

Pat Meyer <neonladyw@gmail.com>

Tue, Apr 15, 2025 at 1:30 PM

To: LUP-Hearings@multco.us, SteerCo <steerco@googlegroups.com>, Pat Meyer <neonladyw@gmail.com>



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Pat Meyer



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