

**April 14, 2025**

**To: Multnomah County Land Use Board**

**From: AJ Thorne, Public Works Director**

**Re: Bull Run Filtration Facility Remand Hearing**

My name is AJ Thorne and I am the Public Works Director for the City of Sandy. I am writing in support of Portland Water Bureau's (PWB) Bull Run Filtration Facility (BRFF.) I have been with the City of Sandy since 2022 and have been working on, among other projects, Sandy's connection to this new piece of infrastructure.

**Regional Need for the project:**

Both Sandy and PWB are under agreement with the Oregon Health Authority to treat any surface water sources for cryptosporidium and other contaminants. This agreement applies PWB's longstanding water source, the Bull Run River, and Sandy's water via its connection to this source. PWB is a regional water supplier serving over 1 million people. If water from the Bull Run is not treated for cryptosporidium by the mandated date of September 30, 2027, water from this source will be deemed unsafe for consumption without boiling. If this facility is not completed, there will be a major socioeconomic impact due to a lack of safe drinking water. Completion of this filtration facility will be a benefit to the region for many years to come.

**Sandy's need for the project:**

Since 2013, Sandy has been a wholesale customer of the PWB. This decision was made as Sandy's growth outpaced its available water sources. Since that time, Sandy has continued its growth and is now reliant on water from the PWB to meet demand on a yearly basis. Additionally, Sandy's infrastructure was designed to provide a fully redundant source if needed. The health and welfare of the Sandy's citizens rely on PWB's ability to provide safe drinking water.

To date, Sandy has committed to the logical option of connecting to the BRFF to provide this additional water required to meet our demand. The drive of a regulatory mandate has forced Sandy to work forward in developing this connection. Substantial funds have been spent on design, land use, planning so far. Sandy will be opening bids for the first phase of this project on the day of this hearing. If the BRFF is not permitted to be built, the citizens of Sandy will be faced with water shortages and a severe lack of resiliency in their water supply year round. Additionally, citizens will be on the hook for all sunk costs for the work completed on the project to date in addition to the cost of designing and building its own treatment plant to treat water from the Bull Run supply. This scenario would take years to remedy and would pose tremendous consequences to Sandy.

As we have seen in recent years, surface water sources are extremely susceptible to wildfires, which are more and more common in the region. Even a nearby fire has the potential to contaminate unfiltered water sources. A major factor influencing Sandy's choice to connect to this filtration facility was resiliency. Sandy's current water treatment plant is located in forestland on the slopes of Mt Hood. Any other source of water that would serve as a viable alternative for Sandy would take many years to complete and result in a filtration plant in a similar, if not the same location. This leaves our water sources and their treatment assets at risk of wildfire. PWB's filtration facility is in a more protected location. Most importantly, the BRFF connection provides Sandy with access to PWB's groundwater sources. In a potential catastrophic forest fire scenario, Sandy's water sources and PWB's Bull Run source could be compromised and unable to provide safe drinking water. With the completion of the BRFF and Sandy's new connection to it, the entire population of Sandy would still have access to safe drinking water.

### **Neighborhood impact**

Once construction is completed on the BRFF, the site will prove to be a great neighbor. With compliance to orders from Multnomah County, the facility will be quiet, nearly invisible and have little noticeable impact on the surrounding area. Infrastructure such as this is designed to meld into the surrounding area as much as possible. This is accomplished with sound and light reduction, thoughtful screening and planting and any required odor control. In order to meet the deadline for completion of this facility, PWB has been working for months on this project. The impact from construction will only be a factor for a relatively short amount of time. Once complete visitors to the area may not even know it is there.

### **Conclusion**

The completion of the Bull Run Filtration Facility will provide safe, sustainable drinking water to the region. Sandy is in full support of this project and request that Multnomah County approves this land use application.

Sincerely,

**AJ Thorne**  
Public Works Director  
City of Sandy  
503-489-2162

In support,



**Tyler Deems**  
City Manager  
City of Sandy  
503-826-1079



LUP Hearings &lt;lup-hearings@multco.us&gt;

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**Bull Run Filtration Facility Letter of Support**

2 messages

**A.J. Thorne** <ajthorne@ci.sandy.or.us>

Wed, Apr 16, 2025 at 8:20 AM

To: "lup-hearings@multco.us" &lt;lup-hearings@multco.us&gt;

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Please see attached and confirm receipt.

Thank you,

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**AJ Thorne, PE**

Public Works Director

City of Sandy

503-489-2162



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**Remand Letter of Support.pdf**

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**LUP Hearings** <lup-hearings@multco.us>

Wed, Apr 16, 2025 at 8:23 AM

To: "A.J. Thorne" &lt;ajthorne@ci.sandy.or.us&gt;

Hello,

In order for written submissions to be delivered to the Hearings Officer prior to commencement of the hearing, submissions must be received by the Land Use Planning office by April 15, 2025 at 2 pm. Given that your comment is after the 2pm deadline, your submission will be exhibited and added to the record during or after the hearing as soon as staff is able. Thank you.

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**Multnomah County**

Department of Community Services - Land Use Planning Division

1600 SE 190th Ave., Portland OR 97233

T: 503-988-3043

E: [lup-hearings@multco.us](mailto:lup-hearings@multco.us)<https://multco.us/landuse>

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