



# City of Oregon City

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## Staff Report

File Number: 15-04

**Agenda Date:** 2/4/2015

**Status:** ATS Review

**To:** City Commission

**Agenda #:** 7a.

**From:** Public Works Director John Lewis

**File Type:** Resolution

### **SUBJECT:**

A Resolution Supporting Governance Changes for the Tri-City Service District

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION (Motion):**

Authorize the City Commission to adopt Resolution 15-04 to support the Local Utility Accountability Act (House Bill 2800).

### **BACKGROUND:**

In 1980, a service district was created and entitled the Tri-City Service District (TCSD). Its purpose was to provide a regional sewerage system to serve Oregon City, West Linn and a portion of Gladstone. The TCSD provides wastewater treatment services for the three cities as well as services to a small population outside of the three cities. Currently, TCSD is also serving portions of the Clackamas County Service District No. 1 under a contract. The Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) makes up the Tri-City governing body, and its important to note that none of the BCC reside within the District.

In order to contribute to a vibrant and successful economy, our local businesses depend on shared public services such as an efficient transportation infrastructure and reliable water mains. As such, we work to maintain constructive relationships with the local government entities that help provide such services. Keeping those relationships transparent and accountable helps ensure a proper level of service for our local businesses and residents.

TCSD is currently considering changes to include an ever changing and aggressive capital improvement program as well as steep rate increases to help pay for the improvement programs. Whether these capital improvements and rate increases are ultimately justified, the decision and analysis process has been ambiguous. All governance decisions are made by BCC and historically, TCSD upgrade decisions have been made with little in the way of community outreach.

The Local Utility Accountability Act would provide a vital measure of accountability to the process. By simply allowing the cities served by Tri-City (Oregon City, Gladstone, and West Linn) to jointly exercise control over the District, a line of accountability would be drawn from residents and businesses directly to the service provider.

A founding principle of our representative democracy is that those who pay for public services deserve direct representation. This bill would not solve every question about governance or

quash every future debate about rates, but it would ensure that those paying into this shared public service have the opportunity to be part of a transparent and directly accountable process.