



CITY OF
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2013

Commissioner Steve Novick highlights risks of inventing new board to control Water and Environmental Services Bureaus.

PORTLAND, OR— City Commissioner Steve Novick joined Commissioner Nick Fish and Portland Audubon Society’s Bob Sallinger today in opposing the push to create a new governmental entity to take control of Portland’s water and sewer systems. “What you’re likely to wind up with is an obscure board that nobody pays attention to except a few corporate special interests, and they’ll push that board to cut rates for corporations at the expense of residential ratepayers,” Novick said.

Novick said that “I think I have some credibility on the issue of water rates. I sat down with Kent Craford and Floy Jones, two of the organizers of this new proposal, and we wrote a letter to the State asking for relief from the reservoir-covering regulations. Sadly, the State said no again. But we were together on that issue. Now, though I think that Kent and Floy are way off base on this idea.”

Novick added that “I have seen what happens when obscure boards set policy. For the past nineteen years, the State Lottery Commission has overpaid video poker taverns at the expense of schools, because the Oregon Restaurant Association pays close attention to what the Commission does, and lobbies it constantly, while parents of schoolchildren don’t even know who’s on the Commission.”

Novick said that there’s the same danger with a low-profile elected board. “The general public doesn’t have time to keep track of dozens of elected officials. But a few big corporations can finance the campaigns of people running for this board. It’s no coincidence that lawyer-lobbyist John DiLorenzo is representing this new group. John’s an entertaining guy and his wife is a friend of mine, but facts are facts. DiLorenzo represents oil and drug companies, and he personally, as a lawyer, fought to overturn campaign finance limits and keep the State safe for unlimited corporate campaign contributions. He figures his clients will be able to buy and sell this low-profile board.”

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