

## KATU.com - Portland, Oregon

[Print this article](#)

---

# Widmer Brothers to city: Don't filter the water!

by Dan Tilkin KATU News and KATU.com Staff

*Originally printed at <http://www.katu.com/news/local/51530042.html>*

PORTLAND, Ore. - One of the original brewers that put Portland on the beer map is afraid the quality of their product could be in jeopardy.

The [Widmer Brothers Brewing Company](#) is begging the city not to install a filtration system on Portland's water supply and they fired off a letter to Commissioner Dan Saltzman voicing their opposition.

[Read the letter \(pdf\)](#)

The Widmer Brothers' water source, Bull Run, includes uncovered and unfiltered reservoirs. A federal judge has ordered Portland to put filters in, a move that the local brewery believes would change the taste of their beer.

"Our motivation is why would you muck up something that doesn't need to be mucked up?" said Kurt Widmer.

The Widmers mistakenly fired off their thoughts to the wrong commissioner. They should have contacted Randy Leonard, who oversees the Water Bureau.

"Had the Widmer Brothers come in and had this conversation and then wrote a letter, I would be more impacted by the letter," Leonard said. "But frankly, their research is about 4 1/2 years old."

The city is asking the Environmental Protection Agency for a waiver so it doesn't have to install the \$300 to \$400 million filtration system but that's a longshot and a deadline for filtered water is just four years out.

"It isn't settled that we have to build the plant yet," said Leonard. "But we have to start planning to build it in order to meet all the timelines, while at the same time we're

### Factoid

The Widmer Brothers  
will use 40 million  
gallons of water this  
year to brew their beer.

fighting the regulation."

When asked whether he really thought the filtration system would affect the taste of their beer, Rob Widmer said "we've brewed our beer in other parts of the country where the water is different and it's a real challenge."

The Widmer Brothers are urging the city to install a less expensive ultraviolet or ozone purification system instead of filters but Leonard said those are a waste of money.