INFORMATION FROM REGIONAL GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

TO CHARTER COMMITTEE

REGARDING WATER ISSUES

NOVEMBER 7, 1991

The Regional Governance Committee (RGC) appreciates the opportunity to offer the following thoughts regarding domestic water issues for the consideration of the Charter Committee.

HIGHLIGHTS OF INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This document includes the following key points:

- A regional water supply plan should be created by building on the current cooperative actions of local governments.

- The State should play a more pro-active role in developing river basin and subbasin plans. The regional water supply plan should be consistent with the state's basin plans, and should influence the preparation of those basin plans.

- Metro should play an enhanced role of coordination and providing information gathering and support services to assist local governments in preparing the regional water supply plan.

- There are opportunities for efficiencies and long-term cost savings in the wholesale (transmission) system which can be achieved by local government cooperation on a sub-regional level. Metro can help foster this cooperation through the exercise of its current authority to oversee the preparation of coordination agreements for special districts. These coordination agreements assure consistency between special district plans and city and county comprehensive plans.

SUMMARY OF RGC PROCESS

As you know, for each major functional issue the Charter Committee addresses the RGC is using two matrices to organize and summarize our information. The first matrix simply describes the current system as we understand it. We tried to describe the current system as the law requires it; common practice is sometimes different. The second matrix describes our current thinking on what the future system should be.

Horizontal Axis/ Water Issues: Along the horizontal axis we have organized the two water matrices into three categories: 1) supply/source (collection); 2) wholesale (transmission); and 3) retail (distribution). These categories are intended to describe the physical components of a water system. The first category, supply/source (collection), means the actual source of the water and any structures necessary to gain access to that water. For example, the Bull Run Reservoir and dam would both fall in this category. Well fields for municipal water use would also be covered here. The second category, wholesale (transmission), is the infrastructure which takes the water from the source to the retail distribution system. The third category, retail (distribution), is the system which delivers water to the end users (i.e. residences, businesses, institutions).

Vertical Axis/functions: Along the vertical axis we have identified a number of types of functions, from "approval authority" to "service delivery". "Approval authority" means the

body or bodies who have the primary approval authority for a plan or structure before it can be built or implemented. "Planning lead" means the entity with the primary responsibility for preparing a long-range plan. "Coordination lead" means the entity responsible for pulling together all of the parties who must prepare a plan. "Information gathering, analysis and support" means the entity responsible for conducting staff functions to support the planning process (e.g.,research studies, computer modeling). "Service delivery" means the entity responsible to implement and maintain the plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS: EFFICIENCIES TO BE GAINED BY ENHANCED REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL PLANNING AND ACTION

The highlights of matrix B describing the recommended future system are briefly described below. We would be happy to provide additional detail or verbal testimony if the opportunity can be provided.

Water Supply: Need for Local Government Regional Cooperation and State Basin Planning

The RGC believes that there is a need for regional water supply planning. The beginning phases of coordinated regional water supply planning are occurring today through regional supply and demand studies being conducted by the Portland Water Bureau with input from water purveyors from throughout the metropolitan region. These planning studies have cost approximately $1 million to date and will require a similar amount to complete. This type of cooperative effort should continue and should be expanded. It should result in the creation of a regional water supply plan which identifies the extent of the need for additional supply, the preferred supply options, and allocates the costs of additional supply commensurate with the benefits to be derived by the individual water purveyors. Two possible mechanisms to implement such cooperative action are intergovernmental agreements as provided for in ORS 190 and the creation of water authorities as provided for in ORS 450.

It is appropriate for this regional cooperative planning effort of the local governments to continue, in part because their role as water suppliers best equips them to understand the practical needs for planning for future supply. This approach will also yield quicker results because it builds on an existing funded planning effort.

However, the RGC is recommending that Metro take on the role of coordinating this regional planning effort. Metro can provide an important benefit to the region by providing a forum for all local governments to participate in this important on-going planning effort. This is true for issues that affect the entire region as well as issues affecting significant portions of the region. Metro should also increase its role in the staff functions of information gathering, analysis and support services. Assuming that a reasonable funding mechanism can be identified, the regional government could provide a good mechanism to equitably share the costs for the various planning studies which will be necessary to develop a credible long-range water supply plan.

RGC also recommends an enhanced role for the state's basin planning program in planning for future water supply for the region. While it is appropriate for this metropolitan region to plan for its future water supply, that planning must occur in the context of a broader planning area: river basins and other water sources outside of the metropolitan area. River basins provide the geographical boundaries for most water supply options. Even inter-basin transfers are fairly common. In the case of the tri-county metropolitan region, political boundaries do not correspond with river basin boundaries. Therefore, we are recommending that the State play a more pro-active role in conducting river basin planning for water supply. It is expected that the regional water plan will need to be consistent with the state's river basin plans. It is also

expected that this region's abilities to favorably impact the state's river basin plans will be greatly enhanced through the development of a cooperative regional water supply plan.

Because the state is the appropriate entity to conduct the needed river basin planning, and because the state has the authority to grant water rights, there is no identifiable benefit in this case to another layer of government (i.e. Metro) having the authority to approve the regional water plan. The benefits of regional planning can be achieved in a more effective and efficient manner through the cooperative actions of local governments, with Metro providing the needed coordinative and staff assistance functions.

Wholesale System: Benefits of Local Coordination

The RGC also recommends that local cooperative action continue to play an enhanced role in planning for the wholesale (transmission) system. We believe that in some cases the wholesale system can be made more efficient through cooperative action between local service providers. In most cases this cooperative action will occur at a sub-regional level (i.e. portion of the metropolitan area). This cooperative local action can be encouraged, in part, through Metro exercising its current authority to implement coordination agreements with special districts to ensure that their actions are consistent with affected city and county comprehensive plans. These coordination agreements can be an excellent mechanism to ensure that decisions result in maximum efficiency to the overall system.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

MATRIX A: SUMMARY OF CURRENT SYSTEM

	APPROVAL AUTHORITY	PLANNING LEAD	COORDINATION LEAD	INFO. GATHERING/ SUPPORT	SERVICE DEL. LEAD
WATER					
• Supply/Source	State/Federal/ Local*	Local/State	Local	Local/State	Local
• Wholesale/Transmission	State/Local	Local	Local	Local	Local
• Retail/Distribution	State/Local	Local	Local	Local	Local

* Note: Land use permits from local governments sometimes needed.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

MATRIX B: SUMMARY OF PREFERRED SYSTEM

	APPROVAL AUTHORITY	PLANNING LEAD	COORDINATION LEAD	INFO. GATHERING/ SUPPORT	SERVICE DEL. LEAD
WATER					
• Supply/Source	State/Federal/ Local *	Local (Regional)/ State (via basin planning)	Metro	Local/Metro/ State (via basin planning)	Local (Regional)
• Wholesale/Transmission	State/Local	Local (Regional)	Metro/Local	Local/Metro	Local (Sub-regional or regional)
• Retail/Distribution	State/Local	Local	Local	Local	Local

KEY

Fed = Federal Government
State = State Government
Local = Local government
Basin planning = a planning program for an entire river basin run through the state
Local (Regional) = cooperative joint action by local governments on a regional scale
Local (Sub-regional) = cooperative joint action by local governments on a sub-regional scale

*Note: Land use permits from local governments sometimes needed.