

**PORT OF OLYMPIA COMMISSION
RESOLUTION 2023-04**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PORT OF OLYMPIA COMMISSION SUPPORTING A
WATERSHED-WIDE COORDINATED APPROACH TO RESTORING THE DESCHUTES
RIVER, DESCHUTES RIVER ESTUARY, AND BUDD INLET.**

WHEREAS the Port of Olympia's vision is, through continual improvement in practices and stewardship, to become an environmentally sustainable Port for current and future generations;

WHEREAS the Port of Olympia cargo operations, recreational boating marinas, and boat repair activities are an economic engine that contributes jobs to the local economy, generates local business revenue, and supports the local tax base;

WHEREAS the Port of Olympia recognizes the environmental sustainability of Budd Inlet relies on the stewardship of the broader Deschutes watershed, and the health of the broader Deschutes watershed similarly relies on the stewardship of Budd Inlet;

WHEREAS the Deschutes Watershed and Budd Inlet have long-standing cultural and spiritual significance to local tribes, particularly the Squaxin Island Tribe. The Squaxin Island Tribe also has usual and accustomed fishing, hunting, and gathering areas in this territory pursuant to the 1854 Treaty of Medicine Creek.

WHEREAS historically Budd Inlet and the Deschutes River were connected by the Deschutes Estuary, where freshwater from the Deschutes River mixed with saltwater from Budd Inlet over extensive tidal flats until the waterbodies were separated by the construction of the 5th Avenue Dam and the creation of Capitol Lake;

WHEREAS Capitol Lake and Budd Inlet are on the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) list of impaired waters that do not meet Water Quality Standards, in part due to low dissolved oxygen (DO) levels caused by sediment accumulation and algae blooms in Capitol Lake;

WHEREAS the Department of Ecology has issued a draft CWA Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) rule for Budd Inlet and Capitol Lake to limit sources contributing to low DO;

WHEREAS the Department of Enterprise Services has completed a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary Long Term Management Project, which evaluated alternatives for the long-term management of the water body;

WHEREAS the Department of Enterprise Services EIS determined that the Estuary Alternative, which includes removal of the 5th Avenue dam and returning Capitol Lake to an estuary, is the Preferred Alternative for long-term management and to meet Water Quality Standards;

WHEREAS the Port of Olympia recognizes that its partners are deeply invested in the health of the Deschutes watershed and Budd Inlet and that many have participated in the stakeholder process for the Environmental Impact Statement and development of the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary Long-Term Management Project (CL-DE LTMP);

WHEREAS the Port and other stakeholders participated in the Funding and Governance Work Group CL-DE LTMP, which developed a Memorandum of Understanding for long-term governance of the constructed assets within the Deschutes Estuary, and for shared funding of the maintenance dredging of increased sediment from the Estuary Alternative, through 2050;

WHEREAS the navigation channel(s) and turning basin in Budd Inlet are federal assets managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and are facing sediment accumulation that impairs vessel traffic;

WHEREAS marine sediments in Budd Inlet contain elevated levels of contaminants of concern such as dioxin and cPAH (carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) from historic industrial operators, which the Port is investigating under the terms of a Department of Ecology Agreed Order under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA);

WHEREAS the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has stated that authority is lacking to expend the federal funds designated for maintenance dredging in a federal navigation channel when that area has been identified as a contaminated site under MTCA;

WHEREAS implementing the Estuary Alternative will improve the health of the Deschutes watershed and restore the ecological connection between the Deschutes River and Budd Inlet, including natural sediment flows from Capitol Lake to Budd Inlet, which will likely impact downstream assets including the federal navigation channel;

WHEREAS the success of both the Estuary Alternative and the Budd Inlet sediments cleanup project depends on coordinating the timing, design, and governance of each project as the projects affect shared resources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Port of Olympia Commission hereby expresses its support for a watershed-wide approach to the restoration of Budd Inlet, the Deschutes River, and the Deschutes Estuary. The Port of Olympia believes the Capitol Lake-Deschutes Estuary Long-Term Management Plan Estuary Alternative and Budd Inlet sediment remediation can be implemented with mutual support among the parties involved and with costs and benefits equitably distributed. As such, the Port of Olympia Commission supports opportunities to coordinate and ensure that the Port of Olympia and its partners address contaminated sediment in Budd Inlet to clear the way for the Long-Term Management Plan Estuary Alternative in order to restore the health of Budd Inlet and maintain a thriving and accessible working waterfront.

ADOPTED by the Port Commission of the Port of Olympia this 11th day of September 2023.

PORT OF OLYMPIA COMMISSION



Amy Harding, President



Joe Downing, Vice President



Bob Iyall, Secretary