

April 19, 2024

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Erik Andersson

**2023-2024**

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Chair Decker, Commissioner Tawney, and Commissioner Perkins:

The Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR) shares our support for the Line Extension Allowance proposal from NW Natural. This Line Extension Allowance will provide the Mid-Willamette Valley region with a valuable resource which will help to attract and retain the traded sector businesses that are vital to our economy.

SEDCOR is a nonprofit, regional economic development organization, working with private and public partners to enhance and diversify the Mid-Willamette Valley economy. As such, we are always seeking ways to improve opportunities to attract new businesses and support existing business growth. This Line Extension Allowance is in alignment with the strategic priorities upon which SEDCOR operates. SEDCOR supports healthy businesses, good jobs, and strong communities by finding, creating, and cultivating economic opportunities in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

To carry any project across the finish line involves an expansive and intricate network of passionate people with a shared vision. Since 1982, SEDCOR has built and strengthened positive and productive partnerships with industry leaders, utility providers, nonprofits, business advocacy groups, community organizations, commodity boards, state and federal agencies, local governments, and more. That is why we are reaching out today to share our support for the Line Extension Allowance proposal from NW Natural.

SEDCOR sees two significant and directly related Economic Development benefits to this proposal.

**Housing Availability:** This first-of-its-kind approach prioritizes low emission homes while balancing the need for housing growth in our state in a way that supports more affordability in building costs and energy security. As an economic development organization, we have heard time and again that access to workforce housing is a significant barrier to finding and retaining employees in traded sector work. When we see policies which aid in the growth and availability of accessible housing in our region, we feel obligated to share our voice on the matter.

**Business Expansion and Recruitment:** It is not uncommon for SEDCOR to receive inquiries from businesses looking to expand existing operations, but where utility infrastructure challenges are a limiting factor. Likewise, when we receive recruitment inquiries, we must focus on areas where utility infrastructure can meet the needs of the business in question. This can limit our scope, which limits the potential for the region. NW Natural's Line Extension Allowance will provide the necessary growth of utility infrastructure into regions of our state that are ideal for economic development.

We urge this commission's support and approval of NW Natural's Line Extension Allowance Proposal and hope that you will consider these economic development and community impacts alongside the additional messages of support received for this proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Erik Andersson, President