NW Rowing Council

I have been a referee for USRowing for over 20 years and have worked at many rowing events held at Vancouver Lake including NW Regional Masters Championships and NW Regional Youth Championships. The NW Regional Masters Championships are annually among the largest held in the United States attracting competitors from Canada and across the USA.

The regional economic impact of these activities generates many hundreds of thousands of dollars in hotel/motel/restaurant taxes, plus sales taxes from purchases from the rowers and their families and friends in the Vancouver/Clark County community.

Severity. of the Pollution Problem: Since 2004 Vancouver Lake has been designated an impaired body of water in need of clean up. We have worked diligently to call this severe problem to the attention of regulatory bodies — to no avail. The severity of the problem includes impairment for temperature, PCBs, bacteria in the water, total phosphorus, Deldrin and other toxins. Co-joined bodies of water, including Lake River, Burnt Bridge Creek, and Salmon Creek add to the Lake's level of impairment.

Risks to Public Health:

Every summer our community misses out on the opportunity to bring many thousands of visitors and competitors to the largest lake within a 50-mile radius of the greater Vancouver/Portland metropolitan area which enjoys an international reputation for hosting world, national, west coast, regional and local competitive rowing competitions because of Lake closures due to blue-green algae.

Risks to Threatened and Endangered Species:

The risks posed by the deteriorated state of the Lake do not impact humans alone. Vancouver Lake is a refuge for migratory waterfowl and has identified salmonids including chum, chinook and steelhead as part of its fish population.

Vulnerability_ of Water Bodies to Degradation: We have been dealing with, and trying to work around, temperature, toxicity, flow and dilution issues, but these debilitating problems remain unaddressed — even as we have reached out and pleaded for assistance. Now we face a new challenge — Eurasian Milfoil Weed that is taking hold throughout the shallow waters of Vancouver Lake — including where we hold our regattas, and where swimmers and other recreational users, such as wind surfers and paddle boarders formerly enjoyed the waters of the Lake. Failure to engage with the multiplying problems impairing colder water flow from the Columbia River through the existing Flushing Channel remains disturbing and distressing to the thousands of citizens who enjoyed the Lake, and it has become an issue that needs your immediate attention.

Local Support and Interest in Watershed:

For more than 30 years, the local, regional, national and international rowing communities have supported and enjoyed the multiple and unique benefits afforded by the amazing water sports venue that is Vancouver Lake. And for more than 40 years, the Vancouver, Clark County, Portland, and Multnomah County communities have understood the remarkable potential that Vancouver Lake represents for outdoor recreation, economic development and the important well-being of community residents spending time recreating with friends and families at this amazing regional resource. Vancouver Lake Regional Park is a major source for recreational shoreline opportunities that is accessible and affordable for those with limited resources, or that use public transportation to access outdoor, water oriented recreational opportunities. Clark County has been using resources

available through its Legacy Land program to acquire property around the Lake to build a series of trails as part of the Lewis & Clark Regional Trail Project. This is providing additional opportunities for access to the surrounding watershed and can be an additional major visitor attraction.

Vancouver Lake is a unique resource to the northwest rowing community, providing a near world class racing course that is easily accessible across the region with support facilities such as restaurants and hotels in close proximity. It would be difficult to replace.