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## 665-2023

Report

### Reappoint Robin Castro, Julia DeGraw, and Joseph Spada to the Portland Utility Board

Accepted

**Office of Mayor Ted Wheeler**

City of Portland

July 20, 2023

As Mayor and Commissioner of Finance & Administration, and in consultation with Commissioner-in-Charge of the utility bureaus Commissioner Mingus Mapps, I request Council confirmation of the following appointments to the Portland Utility Board:

#### Voting Member Appointment

Robin Castro

#### Term

July 1, 2023-June 30, 2026

#### Replacing

reappointment

Julia DeGraw

July 1, 2023-June 30, 2026

reappointment

#### Ex-Officio Member Appointment

Joseph Spada

#### Term

July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024

#### Replacing

reappointment

#### Co-Chair Appointment

Robin Castro

#### Term

July 1, 2023-December 31, 2024

#### Replacing

reappointment

#### Introduced by

[Mayor Ted Wheeler](#);

[Commissioner Mingus Mapps](#)

#### Bureau

[City Budget Office](#)

#### Contact

#### Portland Utility Board Staff

PUB Staff

✉ [utilityboard@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:utilityboard@portlandoregon.gov)

📞 [503-823-1810](tel:503-823-1810)

M-Th 8am-4pm

#### Amy Archer-Masters

PUB Analyst

✉ [amy.archer-masters@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:amy.archer-masters@portlandoregon.gov)

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T/Th 8am-4:30pm, W 8am-noon, or by appt

#### Requested Agenda Type

Consent

#### Date and Time Information

Requested Council Date

August 16, 2023

Future changes to Co-Chair appointments will be made according to bylaws.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Wheeler

Mayor

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### **Biographies and Interest Statements for Appointees:**

#### Voting Member and Co-Chair – Re-appointment

**Robin Castro** has served on the Board since January 2021 and is a working-class East Portland renter with a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Studies. She is an essential worker, union member and Steward for UFCW Local 555 bringing knowledge from 15 years of experience in customer service and small business management. Robin comes from a long line of hard-working people who have experienced economic hardship causing them to miss a utility bill payment from time to time! She hopes to merge her lived experience and her educational background to provide economic and environmental justice for her community.

#### *Statement of Interest – Robin Castro:*

I have served on the PUB for one full term, and I see great value in investing my time in a second term. Through first-hand experience, I know that it takes time to orient to the board's work and now understand more thoroughly how to maneuver as a member. I know the board benefits from maintaining a few second term members as their long-term knowledge of PUB assists the board navigate its long-term goals that often outlast our terms. I have the capacity to provide that expertise and have shown my investment in PUB through my work as Co-Chair. With the renewal of a second term, I do wish to extend my Chair position another 1.5 years to allow me to serve a full term in that role.

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#### Voting Member – Re-appointment

**Julia DeGraw** has served on the Portland Utility Board since January 2021, is the Coalition Director for the Oregon League of Conservation Voters and has spent her entire career in the environmental nonprofit sector. She was born and raised in the Portland Metro region and has lived here her entire life except for four years of college in Wisconsin where she earned a BS in Environmental Studies and Sociology from Northland College. Much of her career has focused on water issues including her nine-year stint at Food & Water Watch as the Senior Northwest Organizer where she often advocated for Portland water issues. She is passionate about ensuring a clean environment for future generations, sanitation and clean affordable

water for all, and dismantling systemic racism in Portland. Her experience interacting with thousands of residents from her campaigns for public office, alongside her professional experiences make her uniquely suited to serve the diverse interests of people of Portland on the PUB.

*Statement of Interest – Julia DeGraw*

Julia shared that it takes time to get your feet under you in an advisory board and after two and a half years of service feels she is grounded to provide feedback at a high level. She is passionate about water and environmental issues, which are central to her personal mission. Julia believes Portlanders deserve advisory boards that are filled with people who have a passion for service and a commitment to make the city better for everyone. Given her professional background this is a board she is well suited to serve on and that can have a meaningful impact with that service. Julia is deeply committed to municipal level change, where she can have the biggest impact to improve peoples' lives and better protect the environment. Julia is interested in reappointment for another full term to continue to serve Portland communities with her work on the PUB.

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Ex-Officio Member –Re-Appointment

**Joseph Spada (Joe)** is a Customer Service Center Supervisor for the Portland Water Bureau. Joe started his journey in public utilities in 2013 at Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative on the Oregon coast. In 2015, he joined the Water Bureau Call Center first as a Customer Accounts Specialist I then a Water Service Inspector II. For seven years he interacted with customers in the field before promoting to a supervisor role in 2023. His combined experience allows for a broader, more in depth understanding of how the Water Bureau's customer service operates and interacts internally and externally. Joe feels honored and privileged that he is able to work for the city in which he lives and strives to provide quality, efficient service to Portland's residents, businesses, and communities.

Outside of work, Joe has previously served as a Chapter chair and Trustee for his former labor union AFSCME 189. In his personal life, on a regular Sunday morning, you can find Joe in his online tutoring sessions learning Romanian so that he can better connect with his wife and in-laws, and make new connections with the Moldovan/Romanian communities here in Portland.

*Statement of Interest – Joe Spada:*

It's a beautiful thing to be part of providing some of the best water in the world to our community. I feel that being a customer and a representative of the Water Bureau is unique and I hope to use my experiences from both aspects to provide better understanding about the work that we do. I want to become further educated in the innerworkings with the internal and

external stakeholders. And I hope to provide a strong, transparent voice for my colleagues and community members.

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## Impact Statement

### Purpose of Proposed Legislation and Background Information

To re-appoint two voting board members, re-appoint one ex-officio member, and re-appoint one co-chair to the Portland Utility Board (PUB). The co-chair Robin Castro was originally appointed for just 6 months due to the expiring term as voting member. This re-appointment as co-chair extends their term to the typical two year term as co-chair. These appointments are required by code to maintain sufficient quorum of the Board. With these appointments, the community portion of the board will have 8 voting members. The PUB is planning a recruitment to fill the additional 3 vacancies in the fall. One ex-officio member is being appointed currently, leaving two ex-officio positions vacant that are currently under recruitment within the Portland Water Bureau and the Bureau of Environmental Services.

### Financial and Budgetary Impacts

There is no direct budget impact of this action, no changes to appropriations. Funds and staffing to support the appointed board members are already budgeted at the City Budget Office and covered by utility rates through interagency resources from the Bureau of Environmental Resources and the Portland Water Bureau.

### Community Impacts and Community Involvement

The Portland Utility Board (PUB) is a 14-member oversight body consisting of 11 voting members and 3 ex-officio members. The PUB provides oversight to ensure accountability and transparency of the two public utility bureaus: The Bureau of Environmental Service and the Portland Water Bureau. The creation of the board was subsequent to a recommendation by a Blue-Ribbon Commission made of public members that took considerable public testimony in identifying issues and solutions.

The voting members being re-appointed were originally selected after an open application process. Outreach for candidates included a range of public notice, social media outreach and personal contacts through board members and staff. The appointments in 2021 followed a recommendation from a subcommittee consisting of PUB members and staff from the two utility bureaus, approved by the subcommittee and board at public meetings where public comment was solicited, and approved by Council in a public hearing. The decision to recommend re-appointment of these members took place in a public meeting of the PUB, following public notice. The Board recognized the value of maintaining members with some history

on the PUB, particularly during this time of transition resulting from Charter changes. The PUB plans to hold a recruitment for the remaining three vacancies later in the year when more information may be available regarding advisory boards and the Board may be better positioned to identify the desired skills and experience for new members.

The Bureau of Environmental Services and Portland Water Bureau select the employees for the ex-officio appointments. The Portland Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services are still recruiting one represented and one non-represented ex-officio members that will be appointed separately.

### **100% Renewable Goal**

This action does not change the City's total or renewable energy use.

### **Agenda Items**

665 Consent Agenda in [August 16, 2023 Council Agenda](https://www.portland.gov/council/agenda/2023/8/16)  
(<https://www.portland.gov/council/agenda/2023/8/16>)

Confirmed

Commissioner Rene Gonzalez Yea

Commissioner Mingus Mapps Yea

Commissioner Carmen Rubio Yea

Commissioner Dan Ryan Yea

Mayor Ted Wheeler Yea