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News Release

For Immediate Release
September 20, 2012

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Work to begin on new Kelly Butte reservoir

PORTLAND, OR -- On September 5, 2012, the Portland City Council voted to move forward with the Portland Water Bureau's Kelly Butte Reservoir Replacement Project. The project will replace the existing 10-million-gallon above ground steel tank atop Kelly Butte in southeast Portland with an underground 25-million-gallon reinforced concrete reservoir that provides added storage capacity.

The new reservoir, which was slated to start construction in 2011, was postponed while the City requested a delay in its uncovered reservoir compliance schedule. Because the Oregon Health Authority denied the delay request last May, the bureau is now moving forward with construction. This project, and the new 50 million gallon reservoir now under construction at Powell Butte Nature Park, will allow Portland to comply with the uncovered reservoir requirements of the federal Long-Term 2 Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2) and reduce the seismic vulnerability of east side water storage.

The construction contract was awarded to Hoffman Construction Company of Oregon. Hoffman is installing erosion control measures and fencing and clearing trees. Starting in October, work will begin to demolish the existing steel tank. Later this fall, excavation will begin for the reservoir.

To accommodate the underground structure, a large amount of soil will be removed from the 2.5 acre reservoir footprint and transported off the butte. Some material will be stored onsite to later backfilled and cover the reservoir, making the final elevations different. An access road will be constructed to serve as a loop to reduce the impact to the Central Church of the Nazarene, which lies at the base of Kelly Butte on SE Powell Boulevard.

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Due to the mostly hilltop construction, the impact to the community will be largely from increased truck volume on SE Powell Boulevard and the I-205 freeway ramps. Access to the site is via SE Powell Boulevard, a state highway. Truck access on SE Powell Boulevard will be right turn in and right turn out.

There will also be large diameter pipe installation work on Kelly Butte and at the street entrance from SE Powell Boulevard. Construction activity will normally take place from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with the possibility of intermittent night and Saturday work. Currently, there are no planned construction activities on Sundays.

Once the reservoir is built, a landscaping plan will add native plant species and trees to the area. The reservoir will be covered with meadow grass. The entire project is slated for completion in 2015.

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