



Our Coalition SUPPORTS HB 2084

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

Our coalition is writing to express our support for HB 2084, which would extend and allocate funds to complete the four pilot projects for place-based planning related to water resources. The place-based planning program was created to fill a critical need for communities to engage in in-depth, thoughtful planning for their water future, ensuring that a long-term plan is in place to meet community, economic and habitat needs.

Since its inception, our members have engaged heavily in the pilot projects, with our local leaders participating heavily in all of the pilot projects currently underway. We have been impressed by all interests in the pilot communities coming together to have difficult, but very necessary, conversations about their water future. We believe these communities will be stronger and better able to work together after the time and effort they've put into this process. Our members have invested significant time and resources into this effort, and we strongly support providing these communities a path to complete their plans and share their lessons learned with the state.

However, in observing how each of the pilot projects moved forward, we think they will have significant "lessons learned" and recommendations to share with the state after the conclusion of their processes. This feedback must be considered prior to moving forward with any additional projects and should be provided as part of a comprehensive program review. This review should include not only the lessons from the four pilot projects, but a review of the scope of the program and a review of other complementary state programs in order to ensure that any funding from this program is complementary to and not duplicative of other state programs that exist.

After completion of the pilots, we would also like to discuss where the state's money is best invested around water supply planning, including how to ensure that the place-based planning program is comprehensive enough to be useful to communities but limited enough to be manageable and achievable. As such, we strongly support sunseting the program and not funding additional projects until a comprehensive review of the program is undertaken.

Thank you for your consideration, and we urge your support of HB 2084.

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