

Testimony to the House Committee on Energy and the Environment on SB 3182

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council strongly supports HB 3182.

SB 1747 will streamline permitting of nonpotable water systems and reduce the State's exposure to risk associated with meeting public health and environmental regulatory requirements.

The legislation, which is intended to create a regulatory structure for the safe and efficient use of on-site nonpotable water systems (ONWS) based on the work of the Water Research Foundation (WRF). Treatment and monitoring requirements will be based upon the 2017 WRF 'Risk-Based Framework for the Development of Public Health Guidance for Decentralized Nonpotable Water Systems' that employs exponential or "log" reduction targets of human-infectious pathogens for different alternative water sources.

Current regulations are interpreted by the Department of Environmental Quality and then coordinated with the Department of Health, Water Resources Division and the State Building Code Council (plumbing) that use misapplied codes and policies not originally intended for this application. The risk-based framework reduces cost while still protecting public health by matching adequately treated alternate water sources with the appropriate end use. For example, using harvested rainwater would require a less extensive treatment for toilet flushing than water collected from a shower would.

These on-site nonpotable water systems offset valuable potable water supplies and unlock untapped potential for more resilient and sustainable water management. One study in California found that 45% of their water demand could be met by reusing alternative water supplies, assuming the full build-out of high efficiency fixtures (which would reduce the amount of alternative water available).

Benefit of the Legislation

- **The legislation will streamline a clear permitting pathway for on-site nonpotable systems, which currently doesn't exist.**
- **The risk-based framework is a science-based internationally-accepted methodology, which will reduce the agencies' exposure to risk associated with meeting their public health and environmental regulatory requirements.**
- **The financial costs of implementing, operating and maintaining ONWS are reduced, which accelerates their adoption and positive outcomes for water conservation, infrastructure expansion, and water affordability.**

- **Integrating ONWS into centralized water systems can improve resiliency during natural disasters and climate change events by diversifying and decentralizing a city's or state's water portfolio.**

By increasing and diversifying our water supplies across Oregon State through the passing of House Bill 3182, we have an opportunity to greatly positively impact public health, environmental quality and our resilience as a community.

Our jurisdiction strongly supports efforts to conserve water. For all these reasons identified, we respectfully request that you vote to approve House Bill 3182.

Oregon Environmental Council urges you to fully fund HB 3182.