



WaterWatch of Oregon
Protecting Natural Flows In Oregon Rivers

HB 2084

Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon
Kimberley Priestley

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
April 30, 2019

Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources.

WaterWatch supports HB 2084

What HB 2084 does: HB 2084 extends the sunset date for the Oregon Water Resources Department grant program for place based planning to allow for the completion of the four pilot planning processes that are currently underway in the Harney, Mid-Coast, Lower John Day and Upper Grande Rhonde basins.

WaterWatch supports HB 2084: WaterWatch was a member of the Policy Advisory Group that helped develop and define the concept of "place based plans" in the original 2012 Integrated Water Resources Strategy. A key component of that discussion was that the state would ensure that the plans would address both instream and out-of-stream needs. WaterWatch was also instrumental in the drafting of the state's guidelines for this program, which again direct that place based plans address both instream and out-of-stream needs. And finally, WaterWatch negotiated amendments to SB 266 (2015) to ensure that legislative direction of this program require that the plans be developed with a balanced representation of interests, are consistent with state law and policy and, importantly, address both instream and out of stream needs.

This work has led to "pilot" place based planning processes that are currently underway in the Harney, Mid-Coast, Lower John Day and Upper Grande Rhonde Basins. WaterWatch is a full member of both the Lower John Day and the Harney Place based planning groups. We have, and will continue into the future, to invest significant time and resources into this endeavor.

These planning effort have taken longer than anticipated, thus we believe an extension of the sunset is necessary.

We also concur with other testimony on the record that once the four pilot projects are completed, it is critical that the state undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the four final plans, as well as the program, to help guide future decisions as to whether continuation of the program is a productive use of state time and resources.

We urge the Committee to vote yes on HB 2084. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

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