



Oregon Water Resources Congress

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May 1, 2019

To: Chair Paul Holvey, Vice-Chair Carl Wilson, Vice-Chair Jennifer Williamson, and Members of the House Committee on Rules

RE: Support of HCR 33

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chair Williamson, Vice-Chair Wilson, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is writing in support of HCR 33, which will help facilitate discussion and action to meet our state's long-term water needs. Whether clean drinking water for communities, irrigation for growing food and fiber, reliable water for businesses, healthy waterbodies to recreate on, or habitat for fish and wildlife, water is a vital resource that impacts every Oregonian.

OWRC is a nonprofit association of irrigation districts, water control districts, water improvement districts, drainage districts and other government entities delivering agricultural water supplies. The water stewards we represent operate complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, hydropower facilities, and other infrastructure that delivers water to roughly 1/3 of all irrigated land in Oregon. Our members are actively seeking innovative ways to modernize these infrastructure systems leading to improved water conditions for farmers, local communities, and the environment we share.

Having viable funding sources for the implementation of infrastructure projects is an essential component to meeting Oregon's long-term water needs and one of the main priorities of our organization. However, we also recognize the need for a statewide framework that incentivizes communities to come together to discuss and plan collaborative projects yielding multiple benefits. Ways to leverage federal, local and state funding is one ingredient, but helping set the table for more productive and less conflict-driven solutions is equally important. Oregon needs a comprehensive vision and long-term infrastructure investment package that uses a broad statewide framework to incentivize collaborative solutions, leverage other funding sources, and catalyze innovative approaches to meeting some of our most vexing water challenges.

HCR 33 will help lay the foundation for this vision and we are supportive of encouraging state agencies, legislators, water stakeholders, and sovereign tribes to develop a strategy for how Oregon can create a comprehensive statewide water investment package. This strategy will necessitate thoughtful planning to ensure that the process is inclusive, collaborative, and meaningful. HCR 33 accurately recognizes the need to facilitate a statewide conversation about key water quality and quantity issues that includes diverse water interests, regional perspectives, and tribal engagement. We agree the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) can be useful as an initial discussion framework about how we develop a robust water investment package that accounts for current and future conditions.

We commend the Legislature's interest in supporting critical discussions about how Oregon meets its long-term water needs for the benefit of people, the economy, and the environment. Our organization is committed to engaging in these efforts along with other collaborative water interests and we look forward to helping in any way we can. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
April Snell
Executive Director

The mission of the Oregon Water Resources Congress is to promote the protection and use of water rights and the wise stewardship of water resources