

February 10th, 2020

Senate Committee on General Government & Emergency Preparedness
900 Court St. NE,
Salem OR 97301

Re: Letter of Support for SB 1562

Dear Chair Riley, and members of the committee,

The Oregon Water Resources Congress and Oregon Environmental Council are submitting this joint letter of support for SB 1562.

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is a nonprofit association of agricultural water suppliers. OWRC has been supporting the protection and use of water rights and the wise stewardship of water resources since 1912,

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

SB 1562 empowers Oregon Department of Agriculture to establish a task force with the goal of bringing together agency staff and regional stakeholders to identify possible means for designating all or part of the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area where scientifically warranted.

In the process the task force will develop a shared understanding of groundwater connectivity in the lower Umatilla basin as well as a shared understanding of groundwater nitrate concentrations and movements within the basin. The group may identify appropriate and accurate monitoring data where available, and identify monitoring needs where such data is not available.

Clearly the regional stakeholders are committed to this process, as their participation and letters of support indicate. Likewise, the willingness of the agencies to engage in the process is indicative of the value they see in it.

We appreciate your support of this effort and are happy to discuss any concerns or questions you may have.

Karen Lewotsky
Rural Partnerships & Water Policy Director
Oregon Environmental Council

April Snell
Executive Director
Oregon Water Resources Congress