

March 04, 2021

**Environmental Defense Fund  
Testimony submitted to the House Committee on Water in support of HB 2018**

Groundwater is a critical resource, supporting drinking water needs, irrigated agriculture, and ecosystems across the state. However, the nature of groundwater poses management challenges in that there are often no immediate visual manifestations of changes in availability. Because of the importance of water to lives and livelihoods of all Oregonians, understanding the water budget is vital to the long-term sustainability of communities, industries, and ecosystems.

**Environmental Defense Fund supports HB 2018**, which directs the Water Resources Department to collect and evaluate data, including monitoring groundwater levels and measuring consumptive use, to create water budgets for the states' hydrologic basins.

The Department needs sufficient data to adequately carry-out long-term planning and management across the state. It is critical that the Department collect data and analyze data on current groundwater use and availability so as to better understand the level of current and future risk to water resources in each basin. The creation of water budgets is a necessary step to building a water secure future for communities across Oregon.

Water resources research, and the dissemination and application of research results and technology transfer are increasingly important to meeting our present and future water needs. Consumptive water use data is essential for the administration and protection of water rights in the West, which are based on beneficial use. Moreover, such data and tools will help mitigate the additional stresses on water resources from the impacts of climate variability and changes in plant and crop evapotranspiration resulting in changed water demand patterns. Water resources planning and management at all levels of government and sound future decision-making depend on our ability to understand, monitor, predict, and adapt to climate variability.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. We request that you support HB 2018 and support any additional funding needed to implement this vital work.

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