



2/225/2020

*284 E Water St, Stayton, OR*

**To:** Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Owens and Reardon, and Members of the House Committee On Water

**RE:** Testimony in support of HB 3221

Dear Chair Helm, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you, Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Owens, Vice Chair Reardon, and Members of the House Committee on Water for this opportunity to testify today in support of HB 3221. My name is Brent Stevenson, and I am the District Manager for Santiam Water Control District. I am also the President of the Oregon Water Resources Congress.

Our district provides water to 17,100 acres of irrigated land between Stayton and Salem, and we own and operate a small hydro facility. Like many other irrigation districts in Oregon, we too are working to modernize our water delivery system. We currently operate of over 114 miles of canals and ditches. If those are converted to pipe we have the potential to provide significant benefits for farmers and fish – and to increase our hydropower generation without causing any impacts to fish and wildlife.

For our district the timing of this is also important. After 35 year of generating hydropower our power purchase agreement with Pacific Power expired at the end of 2019. Trying to renew an agreement has been extremely frustrating. An Interconnection study although we were fine the day before and still interconnected and generating, electrical pole and transformer upgrades, and then our only option, a take it or leave it payment structure at or below our costs to provide, and which is less than 25% of what we pay per kilowatt hour.

The recent natural disasters of the fires and now the winter storm highlight the critical importance of localized resilient power. Our area was out of power for 10-12 days. Our hydropower plant while not huge can run critical infrastructure, water systems communications etc. We are making a huge mistake if we allow utility companies to outsource our locally controlled power and put small generators like us out of business. With HB 3221 we could work directly with our local community to build energy resilience, while supporting local jobs We respectfully ask for your support for HB 3221.