



March 12, 2021

TO: Representative Ken Helm

FR: Jason Miner, Natural Resources Policy Director, Office of Governor Brown
Meta Loftsgaarden, Executive Director, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Tom Byler, Director, Oregon Water Resources Department
Curt Melcher, Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Chris Cummings, Deputy Director, Business Oregon
Richard Whitman, Director, Department of Environmental Quality
Pat Allen, Director, Oregon Health Authority

RE: Support for House Bill 3293

House Bill 3293 provides an opportunity for state agencies that provide funding for water-related projects to support and encourage broad community engagement in project planning. The bill seeks to accomplish the following:

- ✓ Authorizes agencies that fund water projects to make support available to local organizations and local governments for purpose of developing local community engagement plans for water projects.
- ✓ Requires agencies develop best practices related to equitable and meaningful participation in water project planning and decision-making processes.
- ✓ Requires agencies to periodically coordinate to update and ensure uniform application of best practices regarding community engagement planning.

Each of our agencies recognizes that investments we make in natural and built water infrastructure or habitat-related water projects provide important benefits for local communities. It is critical that all impacted groups within those communities have meaningful ways to engage in planning those projects, and as a result, have a say in their own water future.

This bill takes a voluntary approach by providing both funding support and best practices for broad-based community engagement in water project planning. We believe this approach provides an opportunity to help communities – particularly those with fewer of their own planning resources – better engage with disproportionately impacted individuals and groups that can benefit from those projects. We appreciate Representative Reardon bringing this bill forward and support its passage.

cc: House Water Committee Members



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