



**Testimony by Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper and Executive Director  
in support of HB 2594-1, a bill to protect the Oregon's Drinking Water**

March 16, 2021

**HB 2594 Directing the Department of Forestry to Better Protect Community Drinking  
Water Supplies.**

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Owens and Reardon, and Members of the House Committee on Water:

For the record, my name is Travis Williams, Riverkeeper and Executive Director of the non-profit organization Willamette Riverkeeper. Since 1996, we have proudly served as the eyes, ears, and voice of the Willamette River. Together with thousands of Oregonians' support, our conservation and cleanup programs enable us to generate positive change for the Willamette River Basin. We support diversity and inclusion in our work to bring all Oregonians to the Willamette River to recreate, enjoy and protect our river.

We believe in a river with excellent water quality and abundant habitat, and safe for fishing and recreation. We believe this is a fundamental public right. Today I am here to support a bill that will protect community drinking water by better protecting watersheds from logging.

This important base bill gives the Oregon Department of Forestry the obligation to update the rules concerning the classification of watersheds and to enforce best management practices to protect the source of water. This is a problem for many Oregon water systems. More than 75% of Oregon's municipal water supplies come from forested watersheds.

Our primary concern with HB 2594 is that it doesn't go far enough with the modifications proposed in the -1 Amendments. HB 2594 as introduced is preferable approach giving water system managers the tools they need to put real protections in

place to safeguard the forest watersheds on which many Oregonians rely. We are requesting that more significant action be taken to ensure greater protections for Oregon's drinking water supplies.

The needed three steps in the base bill:

- 1) Updating rules for stream classification;
- 2) Remap stream and tributaries and reevaluate classifications; and
- 3) Establish a strong and certain process for protecting threatened streams as sources of drinking water.

These are the steps needed to address this serious challenge to forested watersheds in Oregon. The -1 Amendments don't go far enough for the protections we need.

I thank Representatives Williams and Wilde for working to address this very important issue to Oregonians by sponsoring HB 2594, and I thank Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Owens and Chair Reardon for bringing this bill before the committee today.

Chair Helm and the House Committee on Water, I urge you to forward HB 2594 to the House of Representatives with a DO PASS recommendation. We respectfully request that you reject the -1 Amendments.

Thank you.

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