



## TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS®

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April 14, 2021

Joint Ways and Means Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

*Submitted Online*

### **RE: Support Natural Resource Agencies When Balancing Budget**

Dear Joint Ways and Means Committee Co-Chairs,

Tualatin Riverkeepers is a community-based organization that protects and restores the Tualatin River watershed. We build watershed stewardship through engagement, advocacy, restoration, access, and education. At Tualatin Riverkeepers, we envision a thriving watershed that acts as a valuable community resource for everyone, and strive to exist at the intersection of environmental justice, protection, and conservation so that we all have equitable access to clean water, healthy ecosystems, and enjoyable river opportunities.

We are writing to request your support for protecting natural resources and building a climate resilient Oregon when balancing the state's budget and determining how to use the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Funding for equity, climate, and protection of natural resources should be a priority for the state and we encourage the Committee to address these urgent needs by doing the following in the adopted budget:

1. Focus on equity and environmental justice by funding agencies to reduce pollution, make communities more resilient, protect frontline workers, and center equity in all their work.
2. Focus on health by protecting water, air, and other natural resources. Funding agencies tasked with protecting the environment is critical to achieving high quality water and air that we all rely on for our physical and mental health.
3. Focus on the climate crisis by funding agencies tasked with working on that crisis including state agencies that manage natural resources, energy, and those that protect health and the environment.
4. Use the ARPA funds to build back better by investing in historically marginalized communities that are burdened the most by pollution and by investing in a transition to a clean energy economy.

As you probably know, historically marginalized communities feel the biggest impact from non-climate resilient policies, and disproportionately experience negative effects of our changing environment. If our State is to adequately confront the 21st Century challenges presented by the climate crisis and systemic environmental racism, then we need a budget that reflects this urgency. Please focus on equity, the climate crisis, and the health of all people and the environment when balancing the budget and identifying how to use ARPA funds.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Short', with a stylized 'A' and 'S'.

Ashley Short  
Tualatin Riverkeeper & In-House Counsel  
Tualatin Riverkeepers  
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