



Testimony of

Michael Klobes, Government Affairs Committee Chair

OREGON GROUND WATER ASSOCIATION

SB 5534

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capitol Construction

May 7, 2021

Dear Co-Chairs Holvey, Girod, and Subcommittee Members:

The Oregon Ground Water Association (OGWA) is a nonprofit membership organization composed of water well constructors, well pump and water treatment contractors; hydrogeologists and engineers; manufacturers and suppliers of equipment; and other various trades engaged with the groundwater resource. The mission of the Association is to promote sustainable groundwater development and management for maximum beneficial use without waste or contamination. Organized in 1949, the Association has sought to encourage responsible stewardship of the groundwater resource with its leadership in industry education, public outreach, and legislation.

HB 2145 establishes the Water Well Abandonment, Repair, and Replacement Fund (Fund) with an operative date of January 1, 2022. The Water Resources Department (WRD) is charged with carrying out the program provisions including, but not limited to, providing financial assistance for the following:

- a person or member of a federally recognized Indian tribe in Oregon to permanently abandon, repair, or replace a well used for household purposes;
- a nonprofit, governmental, or other institution meeting qualifications to permanently abandon, repair, or replace well used for household purposes;
- as cost-sharing with other programs to permanently abandon, repair, or replace well used for household purposes; or
- to pay the cost of direct services by licensed well constructor to abandon, repair, or replace well.

According to the Oregon Health Authority, nearly 23% of Oregonians rely on private wells and 88% of public water systems rely in part on groundwater for their drinking water sources. Approximately 3,000 additional wells are constructed annually. Based on these numbers, the WRD estimates funding for the Water Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement program to be approximately \$500,000.

We wholly support the Department in this effort and urge you to protect this valuable and irreplaceable resource, our groundwater, by allocating funds via SB 5534. Thank you in advance for your support.