



January 28, 2020

House Water Committee
Chair Helm

Re: **Support for HB 2142**

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 2142. My name is Chandra Ferrari and I represent Trout Unlimited, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of cold-water fishes, such as trout and salmon, and their habitats. Trout Unlimited has more than 300,000 members and supporters nationwide including over 3,000 in Oregon.

TU supports HB 2142. HB 2142 authorizes the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to modify its fee schedule to help ensure that critical water management services can be provided. OWRD provides many important services including processing, approving and enforcing water right applications/authorizations (including those for instream use) and ensuring the proper and equitable administration of existing water rights through water master services. These services are not only critical for water users, but also for salmon, trout and other fish species that rely on adequate quantity and quality of water within streams at key times to provide sufficient habitat. Ensuring that OWRD has adequate capacity to perform its critical functions is crucial under normal conditions yet takes on a new urgency in the face of climate change and predicted future drought conditions which will likely exacerbate water management challenges in many areas.

Achieving a secure and resilient water future requires investment in essential water management services. Unfortunately, OWRD's current fee schedule, if not modified, would result in the loss of a significant number of OWRD staff positions leading to a considerable decrease in the scope, scale and timeline of services. The revenue generated by HB 2142 will not restore all of these positions but will ensure that the most critical functions are able to be carried out within reasonable timeframes. The bill does result in a fee increase to water users, but the increase maintains a 50/50 split between General Fund and fees consistent with past practice. HB 2142 constitutes a reasonable and fair approach to help ensure that OWRD maintains critical capacity during a particularly tumultuous time. Accordingly, TU supports HB 2142.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chandra Ferrari".

Chandra Ferrari
Senior Policy Advisor
cferrari@tu.org
(916) 214-973