



WaterWatch of Oregon
Protecting Natural Flows In Oregon Rivers

HB 2143

Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon
By Kimberley Priestley
Submitted to House Committee on Energy and Environment
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Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources.

WaterWatch supports HB 2143

HB 2143 would adjust and simplify the fee structure for hydroelectric projects in Oregon. This bill is necessary to retain critical staff within three agencies: Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Water Resources Department.

Under Oregon's hydroelectric statutes, these three agencies are charged with protecting Oregon's natural resources and public health and safety. To fulfill the many statutorily required duties required under Oregon's hydroelectric statutes it is critical that current staffing levels are preserved.

The hydroelectric fees statutes have not been amended since 1999. Without this fee adjustment Oregon's hydroelectric program will see significant shortfalls. The State's hydroelectric program is both robust and complex. Adequately staffing this program is critical not only for maintaining services for project applicants and operators, but also for protecting the interests of the public at large.

We urge the Committee to support HB 2143. Thank you for consideration of our testimony.

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