



To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
From: Rachel O'Connor, Environmental Defense Fund
Re: Environmental Defense Fund's support for HB 3124

April 18, 2023

Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Hartman, Vice-Chair Owens, and Members of the Committee,

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) supports HB 3124, the Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BiDRAWS).

EDF is a non-profit that utilizes policy, management, science, and data to help build balanced, climate resilient water systems that ensure long-term water security for communities and the environment.

The components of BiDRAWS identified below would improve Oregon's ability to manage both ground and surface water in the face of climate change and drought, better measure and account for water across all uses, increase coordination with Tribal Nations, engage communities that have historically been marginalized, leverage federal and state funding to improve flow and passage conditions for critical fish populations, and focus resources in basins that have undertaken robust planning processes, such as the Deschutes and Harney basins.

Planning, Coordination and Capacity

- **1-2:** Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) Update and Implementation. \$970,000
- **1-3:** Community Funding and Agency Capacity for Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning. \$3,850,000
- **1-4:** Continuation of the Tribal Water Task Force, OWRD Tribal Liaison, and Increasing Tribal Capacity to Engage on Water. \$1,350,000
- **1-5:** Building Community Capacity for Environmental Justice Communities to Engage on Water. \$1,500,000
- **1-12:** Targeted Investment: Piloting Voluntary Groundwater Agreements in the Harney Basin. \$577,000
- **1-14:** Core Agency Responsibilities: Increasing OWRD Field Staff Capacity. Cost TBD

Data and Analysis

- **2-2:** Oregon Water Data Portal Development. \$2,251,846
- **2-4:** Increasing Water Use Measurement and Reporting. No fiscal impact
- **2-6:** Statewide Streamflow and Stream Temperature Monitoring Instream Flow Studies Coldwater Refugia Project. \$1,562,984
- **2-7:** Statewide Stream and Groundwater Monitoring. \$1,000,000

Water for Farms – Agricultural Resilience and Food Security

- **4-6:** Agricultural Water Technical Assistance. \$3,600,000

Water for Fish – Instream Priorities and Watershed Health

- **5-3:** Water Acquisitions Grant Funds and Position Continuity (OWEB). \$382,146
- **5-4:** Process-Based Restoration, Natural Storage, and Watershed Benefits. \$6,000,000

- **5-8:** Targeted Investment: Studying Springs in the Deschutes Basin. \$612,418

Outreach and Engagement

- **7-4:** Community-Led Groundwater Outreach and Engagement in Support of House Bill 2018 [2021]. \$500,000
- **7-5:** Water Learning and Communication Grants to Community Based Organizations. Cost TBD

EDF is a member of the Oregon Water Partnership (OWP), which submitted testimony for HB 3124, available [here](#). In addition to individual priorities identified in this public comment letter, EDF continues to maintain the positions noted in the OWP testimony. EDF encourages funding of these components to address the near- and long-term water security needs of communities and ecosystems.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel O'Connor". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Rachel" and last name "O'Connor" clearly legible.

Rachel O'Connor
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Environmental Defense Fund
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