

**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Resources and Water
on HB 3124**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

As we noted in our earlier testimony on this bill, OEC supports aims of HB 3124, the Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BIDRAWS). The state needs to develop a big picture approach to water management, and HB 3124 is a heroic attempt to embrace that challenge.

OEC supports the following components of HB 3124 with accompanying recommendations:

- #1-2: Update and implementation of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. We recommend that this work be undertaken with a firm commitment to increasing agency coordination and reduction of programmatic silos and with full funding for DEQ POP¹²⁵
- #1-4: Continuation of the Tribal Water Task Force; OWRD Tribal Liaison; increasing Tribal capacity to engage on water
- #1-5: Building community capacity for environmental justice communities to engage on water
- #1-6: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation water rights settlement
- #1-10 Development of a Deschutes Basin integrated water plan
- Support core agency responsibilities,
 - #1-15: Increasing capacity to support water rights permitting
 - #1-16: Water rights and protest backlog reduction
 - #1-17: Supporting watershed restoration efforts including full funding for DEQ POP 124
- #2-2: Oregon water data portal development, including full funding for DEQ POP 160
- #2-7 Statewide stream and groundwater monitoring
- #3-1 through #3-11, inclusive, including full funding for DEQ POPs 120, 121, 122, 126, 128
- #4-5: Drought resilience and adaptation grants
- #4-6 Agricultural water technical assistance grants
- #4-7 Mini-grants for resilience/adaptation and relief for small scale farms and ranches

- #4-9: Drought-resistant crop research and development
- #4-10 Soil health and protection
- #6-3: Water reuse coordination
- #6-5: Assessing feasibility and implementing multi-benefit water projects. We recommend adding explicit language including natural and green infrastructure projects in this component
- #6-6: Artificial recharge and aquifer storage and recovery projects and coordination
- #6-7: Morrow and Umatilla drought relief aquifer recharge and aquifer storage and recovery project
- #7-3: Culturally appropriate flooding and water-related notification systems

In addition, as a member of the Oregon Water Partnership, OEC supports the following components of and recommendations for HB 3124:

- #1-14: Increasing OWRD field staff capacity
- #2-4: Increasing water use measurement and reporting
- #2-6: Statewide streamflow and stream temperature monitoring, instream flow studies,” and the cold-water refugia project
- #5-1: Fish passage barrier removal
- #5-3: Water acquisitions grant funds and position continuity (OWEB)
- #5-4: OCRF for projects that increase ecosystem drought resiliency
- #6-1: Irrigation modernization project implementation funding, **but** only available to applicants that use the Allocation of Conserved Water Program to legally protect a portion of the conserved water, ensuring public benefit for public funds
- #1-2: We recommend fully funding ODFW POP #107 Integrated Water Resources solutions, elements of which appear in multiple components of the BiDRAWS Package – we suggest reassembling the POP and adding it in Component #1-2 “IWRS Update & Implementation