



**Oregon
Winegrowers**
ASSOCIATION EST 1981

April 18, 2023

TO: House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources & Water Committee

FROM: Oregon Winegrowers Association

RE: Support for concepts in HB 3124 – BiDRAWS Package

The Oregon Winegrowers Association (OWA) represents hundreds of winery and grape growing members from every winegrowing region in Oregon, and our members represent two-thirds of Oregon's overall wine production. For more than 40 years, OWA has been the leading advocate for Oregon wineries and growers. Today, we write as efficient irrigators committed to supporting water policy initiatives that balance protection of existing water rights with current and future water needs of all stakeholders.

Through this letter, we offer our support for drought package concepts that align with our association's water policy priorities, impact winegrowing regions of the state, and that are specifically identified for possible inclusion in HB 3124. There are several other concepts in the drought package that we support that are in stand-alone bills, including SB 956, HB 3103, HB 3163, and HB 3164. We do not speak to those in this letter; however, in the event those bills cease to be stand-alone bills, we would support their inclusion as a part of the bipartisan drought package.

Planning, Coordination, Capacity: OWA supports policy initiatives that aim to adequately resource integrated work between agencies with jurisdiction over water resources in Oregon. In addition, we support bolstering staff resources for issuance of new water rights and responding to issues, questions, and concerns in the field. For these reasons, we support the following concepts and their descriptions in the BiDRAWS Framework:

- 1-1: Interagency Water Coordination
- 1-13: Emergency Response/Recovery Program Continuity
- 1-14: Increase OWRD field staff capacity
- 1-15: Increase capacity to support water rights permitting

Data and Analysis: OWA supports policy action and initiatives to implement water use data collection systems that improve the state's understanding of how much water is available for use and how water is being valued by Oregon's water users. OWA also supports building expertise and providing resources for enhanced data collection and developing water mapping tools. For these reasons, we support the following concepts and their descriptions in the BiDRAWS Framework:

- 2-1: State of Water Resources Report and Basin Assessments
- 2-2: Open Water Data Portal Development
- 2-3: User testing of the Oregon Water Map Explorer and Water Data Portal Outreach
- 2-4: Increasing Water Use Measurement and Reporting
- 2-7: Statewide Stream and Groundwater Monitoring
- 2-8: Statewide Mapping of Water Resources and Mineral Resource Potential

Agricultural Resilience and Food Security: OWA members do feel and expect to continue feeling the direct and indirect impacts of drought in their vineyards in various parts of the state. Effective water resource management in Oregon will require our agricultural sector to adapt how they use water. We support policy initiatives that assist farmers through the transition to more efficient irrigation infrastructure, rotating crops, or other practices that will set them up for long term resiliency. For these reasons, we support the following concepts and their descriptions in the BiDRAWS Framework:

- 4-1: Protecting Producers Against Losses Due to Drought
- 4-2: Safety Net Resources for Disaster Relief of Producers and Irrigation Districts
- 4-4: Increase Capacity to Process Water Rights for Districts
- 4-5: Drought Resilience and Adaption Grants
- 4-9: Drought Resistance Crop Research and Development

In-stream Priorities and Watershed Health: OWA supports policy options that would invest in improving watershed and ecosystem health for long-term viability of water resources. Water ecosystem health is critical to maintaining the water resources for all water users for years to come. For these reasons, we support the following concepts and their descriptions in the BiDRAWS Framework:

- 5-2: Watershed Drought Resiliency
- 5-3: Water Acquisitions Grant Funds and Position Continuity
- 5-4: Process Based Restoration, Natural Storage, and Watershed Benefits
- 5-5: Boost Capacity to Apply for Federal Funding

Water Project Investments: Our membership supports efforts by the state to invest in essential water infrastructure because modernizing this infrastructure will improve efficiency of use and create more opportunity for more users to reliably access water. We also support proposals to leverage state resources to pull down federal dollars for investment in significant and impactful infrastructure projects. For these reasons, we support the following concepts and their descriptions in the BiDRAWS Framework:

- 6-1: Irrigation Modernization Match for Federal Funds
- 6-5: Assessing Feasibility and Implementing Multi-Benefit Water Projects

Outreach and Engagement: OWA strongly believes that continued communication between all stakeholders at the local, state, and regional levels is critical for collaborative and informed water planning. Providing opportunities for continuous engagement is the surest way to avoid a siloed view of issues and solutions. For these reasons, we support the following concepts and their descriptions in the BiDRAWS Framework:

- 7-1: Statewide Water Conference and Research Learning Agenda
- 7-4: Community-Led Groundwater Outreach and Engagement in Support of HB 2018

OWA strongly supports water policy options that reimagine-- without upending—the approach our state takes into the future for responsible balancing of needs and for the long-term vitality of our state. We believe the BiDRAWS package is the product of a comprehensive evaluation of the interconnected water needs of different stakeholders in the state and has a lot of promise to make Oregon a leader in creative and collaborative water management.

With that being said, in order to offer full support or suggest modifications to any of the proposals, we need to see specific language for this bill and reserve the right to revisit our support of the concepts outlined above once measure language becomes available.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

Jana McKamey
Executive Director
Oregon Winegrowers Association