



Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District
32065 E. Shingle Mill Lane, Arch Cape, OR
Tel: 503-436-2790

January 31, 2023

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

RE: Support for HB 2813

Chair Helm and Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens,

The Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District offers our strong support for HB 2813, which provides an effective approach to providing safe and secure drinking water across Oregon through the acquisition, protection, and enhancement of priority source water areas with willing landowners.

Historically challenged by pollution, coastal communities are now seeing growing stress on source water supplies through increasingly dry summers, rising seasonal demands, and ongoing conversion threats. Along the Oregon coast, the Department of Environmental Quality identified 50 communities that are dependent on surface water to supply drinking water to residents. Located on the North Oregon Coast, Arch Cape is one of those communities. Many of these communities maintain limited control of the management of their source water areas, leading to fluctuations within the water quantity and quality available year-round. With the dry season extending later into the fall, hotter summers, and increased intensity of precipitation, watershed ownership and protection is a vital component for ensuring water quality and security.

HB 2813 is informed by scientific consensus, watershed management expertise, and the lived experiences of Oregonians, specifically the residents of Clatsop County. This legislation has been introduced with the intention of maintaining Oregon's working forestlands, with a renewed support for the health and livability of coastal communities. This is the same approach that was taken to develop the Arch Cape Forest.

After eight years of work, Arch Cape was fortunate to protect our community's drinking water supply through strategic acquisition of our source watershed. This was done through partnership with North Coast Land Conservancy, Sustainable Northwest, and foundational relationships with previous landowners and neighboring timber managers. In total, Arch Cape Water District was able to acquire 1,441 acres of private forest, ensuring the protection of our source water supply into the future.

This acquisition came together through significant federal funding, including \$3.5 million dollars from the USDA Forest Legacy Program, \$250,000 in Clatsop County Funding, over \$300,000 in local donations, and \$2 million in American Rescue Plan Act Funding. Despite our success, other communities are finding this approach difficult to scale. Funding and coordination provided in HB 2813 will reduce the reliance on one-off opportunities and create reliable match and leverage for private and federal resources.



Access to reliable and clean drinking water is a right for all Oregonians, and something that we can no longer take for granted. We can achieve this goal with strategic and cost-effective investments in the maintenance of forests and their broad suite of environmental, economic, and community benefits.

For these reasons, we thank you for your leadership and work on this pressing matter and urge you to support HB 2813.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra J. Birkby".

Debra Birkby
President
Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply Board

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nadia Gardner".

Nadia Gardner
Vice President
Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply Board