



February 1, 2023

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

From: The Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County (EDALC)

RE: Support for HB 2813 - Ensuring Safe and Secure Drinking Water

Chair Helm and Committee Members,

I am the Community Connector at the EDALC. I network with community members and leaders in collaborative meetings based on human-need-meeting efforts in our rural Central Oregon Coast communities and throughout the state.

Clean, secure drinking water sources are foundational to the health and sustainability of our community members, businesses, agriculture industry, fishing industry, and visitors. This is a bipartisan need faced in Lincoln County and across Oregon, which has become evident in my regular networking with rural community leaders statewide. I am writing today to support HB 2813, a bipartisan bill that would help ensure secure and safe drinking water for communities in Oregon. HB 2813 would help communities and water suppliers secure plentiful drinking water, increase resilience to climate change, and provide a state funding source to protect water resources and public health.

Lincoln County's multiple water providers and watersheds are all faced with shared challenges, specifically reduced water supply during our warmest, driest months. These months bring us the heaviest tourist visits (2-3 times our year-round population). As experienced in the local Otis fires of 2020, these months bring the most significant risks for wildfire, which requires abundant water sources to combat these life-threatening situations. These challenges are a statewide issue, as the past years of warm, dry temperatures, intense wildfire seasons and water scarcity in all corners of the state have shown. Our communities have made efforts to improve the health of their watersheds and reduce water consumption. However, aging infrastructure and increasing resident and tourist populations are outpacing the capacity and finances of the water providers to keep up with our community's needs.

HB 2813 will provide meaningful support for many communities facing water insecurity and will help leverage unprecedented federal funding coming down to our state. We encourage Chair Helm and the committee members to support this bill and appreciate the opportunity to testify.

Thank you,

Leslie Palotas, EDALC Community Connector