

Date: February 23, 2023



To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Chair Helm Representative Levy
Vice-Chair Hartman Representative Marsh
Vice-Chair Owens Representative McLain
Representative Boice Representative Scharf
Representative Gamba



From: Oregon Water Partnership



RE: **Support for HB 3164** – Removing Barriers to Instream Leasing of Water Rights

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



Oregon Water Partnership supports House Bill 3164, which simply eliminates the 2024 sunset on Oregon's split-season instream leasing program and removes a ten-year cap on participation. We are a diverse partnership of statewide conservation groups with a common goal: to advocate for balanced water policies that ensure cold clean water to sustain healthy communities, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Our priorities for the 2023 legislative session are to build resilience for Oregon's water future, bring water data into the 21st century, support smart water management, and protect and restore our waters.



Split-season instream leasing is an important tool for water supply management and conservation that has been in statute since 1987. **Split-season instream leasing is a voluntary mechanism that allows water users to support instream and out-of-stream beneficial uses in the same year.** The tool allows water right holders to use water for irrigation or other existing uses for part of the water year, and then lease the water instream when it matters most to fish. The Integrated Water Resources Strategy calls on the state to expand the use of voluntary programs to protect and restore streamflows; HB 3164 would do just that.



Oregon's split-season instream leasing program makes good ecological, agricultural, and economic sense. Please support HB 3164 to eliminate the sunset on the split-season instream leasing program and keep this tool in the voluntary water management toolkit.



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