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February 23, 2023

House Committee on
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE Salem Oregon 97301

Re: HB 3222 - Support

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Hartman, Vice-Chair Owens, & Members of the Committee:

Verde is a community-based organization whose mission is to build environmental wealth through organizing, advocacy, and social enterprise. Environmental wealth means many things, like clean air and water, but it also means the ability to participate in decisions around the environment in which people live, work, play, or practice spirituality.

Verde supports HB 3222 and greatly respects the work of the High Desert Partnership as a model of an entity that helps bring together community voices from different perspectives to make collaborative decisions about the natural resources in their community and how best to build environmental wealth in the Harney Basin. It may seem unlikely for a Portland-based organization to support the work of a project in Eastern Oregon, but Verde believes that more organizations like ours should extend support to communities like Harney County, especially when those projects are so in line with our values as an organization.

Verde was invited to participate in a water tour in Harney Basin in August of 2021 and we were struck by the thoughtful and genuine community partnerships on display as well as the deep knowledge of the Basin, the wetlands, and the broader water situation in everyone to whom we spoke. These strong levels of community awareness, education, and commitment are due to over a decade of committed work by the High Desert Partnership. Verde is confident that no other entity, including state agencies, is equipped to understand the restoration needs of the Silvies River Floodplain, the Donner und Blitzen River Floodplain, Malheur Lake, and in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Nor is there any entity as well-positioned and trusted to ensure that ranchers and farmers are included, engaged, and invested in the process.

Respectfully,

Oriana Magnera
Energy, Climate, and Transportation Manager, Verde