

WATER LEAGUE

*The mission of Water League is to engage
the public in the stewardship of water.*

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February 22, 2023

To: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Representative Ken Helm, Chair
Representatives Annessa Hartman and Mark Owens Vice-Chairs

RE: Water League supports HB 3164 that.

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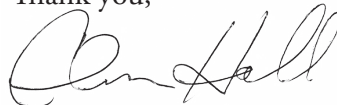
Christopher Hall

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

Water League supports HB 3164 to become an ongoing program to convert all or a portion of a water right in-stream; however, we request HB 3164 be amended to change the provision in Section 1 (3) (a) to state: "The uses of the existing water right and the in-stream water right may be concurrent upon department approval." We believe that some of the water could remain converted to an in-stream water right while the rest of the water right is simultaneously used for its original purpose.

Any water that can be left in the stream is good conservation policy that is more important to the security of Oregon's water than is the antiquated policy that the entire water right must be used, or else that portion be canceled. Oregon's waters are over appropriated throughout many areas of the state. The nineteenth-century idea called "Use it or lose it" must come to an end because the cancellation of water rights can no longer be a pretense for permitting new water right applications to replace the canceled certificates. Therefore, the argument against a simultaneous conversion of a portion of a water right to in-stream use while the remaining portion is used for its original purpose is not justified.

Thank you,



Christopher Hall
Executive Director