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### **Testimony on HB 3163**

Oregon Farm Bureau Federation

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

March 2, 2023

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Farm Bureau Federation appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of our nearly 6,600 family farm and ranch members across the state of Oregon, all of whom rely on water in one form or another for their farms and ranches to remain viable. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on HB 3163, which appropriates money to OWRD for water planning.

Water is the lifeblood for Oregon's farmers and ranchers; it is essential for Oregon's agricultural economy and many farms and ranches in Oregon cannot operate without secure access to water. Agriculture contributes an estimated \$50 billion dollars to the state's economy, making it Oregon's second largest economic driver. Given the importance of water to all of Oregon's 220+ commodities, it is critical that we ensure that we maintain access to water and invest where we can in securing a better water future for Oregon.

Place-Based Water Planning was created in 2015 and this voluntary, local, program for the purpose of facilitating critical conversations among local stakeholders to identify water resources challenges and opportunities has allowed four place-based planning projects to utilize state funding to create place-based water plans. The key has been the identification of needs at the *local* level with diverse *local* stakeholders, which is why Oregon Farm Bureau is neutral on HB 3163 as drafted. Farm Bureau believes that local water planning initiatives should happen with the support of local elected officials, not around them. In response to this we have asked for amendments to HB 3163 to incorporate county Commissioners of the effected counties on a place-based planning grant application to sign off/acknowledge the application prior to submittal to Oregon Water Resources Department for review for funding. Ultimately, the success, development of innovative partnerships, and sound solutions necessary to tackle today's water challenges take the buy-in of the whole community and who better represents the local community than their local elected leaders.

We would encourage the committee to consider adding local elected officials as part of the process of local water planning and if HB 3163 can be amended to reflect that change, Oregon Farm Bureau would move to support the legislation. Thank you for your time.

Please email [lauren@oregonfb.org](mailto:lauren@oregonfb.org) with any questions related to these comments.