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March 14, 2023

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE Salem Oregon 97301

Re: HB 3100 – Support

Chair Helm, Vice Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Owens, and members of the committee:

Verde is a community-based organization whose mission is to build environmental wealth through organizing, advocacy and social enterprise. We support HB 3100.

The Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) is an important way to identify water needs and benefits and put the actions in place that help them to be realized. While past iterations of the IWRS have included public process, far too many communities and community members do not know what it is, why it exists, and more importantly, did not contribute to the content. Verde supports HB 3100 as there are a number of elements that can help improve engagement around the IWRS, especially by communities who have been left out of past processes. Two are present in the bill and one key element is missing:

The indication in Section 1 that the IWRS should be implemented collaboratively and across interests sends an important signal. As Verde understands it this will support collective, high-level framing and on-the-ground actions that work for communities. There may also be some elements of the IWRS that may not lend themselves well to broader engagement. Verde supports landing amendment language such that it doesn't have unintended consequences in this regard, but doesn't lose the core value of inclusive process that provides meaningful opportunities for input and influence from a diversity of stakeholders. Specifically, this could be accomplished by modifying Section 1 (6)(g) as follows:

(g) How the integrated state water resources strategy will be implemented at the state, regional, water basin and local scales, in partnership with public, private and civic partners in a balanced and integrated manner, **as appropriate:**

To that end, Verde may be alone in its support of advisory groups, but will put that support on the record nonetheless. We've all been part of ones that were actively counterproductive, and ones that were a fluffy waste of time. Collaborative spaces can also be an administrative burden and exhausting to facilitate. But at their best, these spaces can foster new relationships and allow ideas that might otherwise live in siloes to flow together. A good collaborative process is not unlike a healthy water basin. Advisory bodies can also be important accountability and oversight mechanisms that equitably balance different perspectives that might otherwise be drowned out. Even if Section 2 is removed from the bill, the spirit and intention should not be.

To that end, the subsections of Section 1 (6)(g) are important to preserve: (A) The development and implementation of place-based integrated water resources strategies. (B) The formation of task groups, work groups or advisory groups to advance specific recommended actions. (C) Declarations of cooperation between diverse water stakeholders that describe the stakeholders' individual and collective commitment to advance specific recommended actions in a balanced and integrated manner.

Finally with regard to equity, while Section 2 names environmental justice organizations, equity and inclusive community engagement – not just with interest groups – are not explicitly named in HB 3100. The IWRS should be developed, implemented, and overseen in ways that are equitable, especially as a means to, in the spirit of IWRS action 8C, promote community education and training opportunities. This could be accomplished by modifying Section 1 (6)(f) as follows

(f) Provisions to ensure communication with the public and partnership with tribes and key stakeholders to implement and develop recommended actions **in ways that are equitable and inclusive and promote education, capacity building, and mutual understanding for communities around water."**

HB 3100 is an important attempt to update the process around the IWRS and ensure that it is meaningful, effective, and Verde hopes, also inclusive and equitable not just of the traditional water interests who have informed past versions.

Respectfully,

Oriana Magnera
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