

Support HB 2813

Ensure Safe and Secure Drinking Water in Oregon

Bear Ridge Community Forest. Photo by Ben Hayes, Springboard Forestry.

What is Source Water Protection?

All of our drinking water comes from a source—a lake, river, stream, or aquifer—and the best way to protect drinking water is to make sure its source is protected.

Source water protection refers to practices that protect and improve the quality of our drinking water using our—forests, rivers, wetlands—“green infrastructure” to provide affordable public benefits. While for some, clean water may seem as easy as turning on the tap, a growing number of Oregon communities face challenges accessing clean, reliable, and affordable water.

These challenges will become more complex as our built infrastructure ages, climate change and wildfire add uncertainty, and as tourism trends change and populations surge in places like the Oregon coast in the summer.

HB 2813 is a bipartisan bill that will establish a grant program at the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to protect, restore, and enhance sources of drinking water.

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A Pathway to Source Water Protection

Some communities are already engaged in this work, but many lack the capacity to tackle source water protection alone—operating with small or all-volunteer staff, limited budgets with few ratepayers, or serving low-income populations. State support remains a critical missing piece to ensuring that all communities can access the benefits of source water protection. HB 2813 will fill a key financial gap to provide capacity and funding for source water projects.



Currently, 2.8 million Oregonians rely on water from forested watersheds. Ensuring that these areas are not subdivided and converted will help communities ensure an abundant, affordable, and secure water supply.

Why is Protecting Source Water Important?

Where we have healthy natural lands, we have reliable water for people, fish, and wildlife. In Oregon, over 50% of the land area surrounding community drinking water sources is privately owned, providing a great opportunity for additional voluntary conservation measures. Without protection, these lands face conversion to development, fragmentation, and seasonal use pressures that can impact water quality and security.

HB 2813 will help communities and water suppliers secure plentiful drinking water, increase resilience to climate change, and provide state funding to match and leverage private and federal funding to protect water resources and public health—while maintaining working forests and their economic benefits!

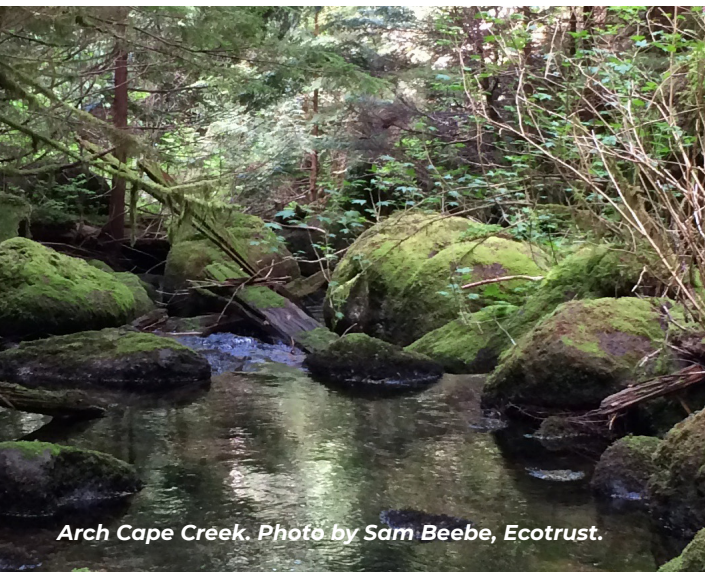
Leveraging Federal Funding Sources

HB 2813 provides strategic tools for long-term water security now instead of dealing with a water availability crisis later. Its programs will leverage federal funds from programs such as Forest Legacy, Community Forest and Open Space, and the Drinking Water Provider Partnership—all of which require non-federal match that Oregon currently lacks.

Questions? Contact Us

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Arch Cape Creek. Photo by Sam Beebe, Ecotrust.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION IN ACTION Arch Cape Community Forest

Just last year, the small community of Arch Cape acquired 1,500 acres of coastal forestland to protect their drinking water sources. This project was possible through the leveraging of multiple funding sources—Forest Legacy, community donations, Clatsop County, and American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding. This project protects their drinking water source into the future—benefiting the local community and local species!

Oregon must act now to leverage unprecedented federal funding and ensure drinking water security. Please join us in supporting HB 2813!