



To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Natural Resources
From: Rachel O'Connor, Environmental Defense Fund
Re: Environmental Defense Fund's support for HB 5043

April 07, 2023

Co-Chair Dembrow, Co-Chair Pham, and Members of the Committee,

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) supports HB 5043 and requests the consideration of additional POPs not included in the GRB. HB 5043 provides the Oregon Water Resources Department with the capacity and resources necessary to continue the critically important work of the Department in carrying out its vision to "assure sufficient and sustainable water supplies are available to meet current and future needs."

EDF is a non-profit that utilizes policy, management, science, and data to help build balanced, climate resilient water systems that ensure long-term water security for communities and the environment.

Below are POPs that EDF feels are essential to (1) providing the foundational components necessary for operational excellence, (2) addressing region-specific water management issues with tailored, high-impact investments, and (3) equipping the Department with resources necessary to assure sufficient and sustainable water supplies.

Providing the foundational components necessary for operational excellence.

- **POP 104: IT Foundation, Modernization & Strategic Plan – \$1.5m GF**
Not included in the GRB
Package 104 provides OWRD with the staff capacity necessary for the Department to modernize IT systems and be in compliance with new mandates, building a more efficient system to carry out the mission and support the public.
- **POP 120: Improving Data Accuracy and Availability – \$1.7m GF**
Not included in the GRB
Package 120 allows OWRD to undertake efforts that improve and expand upon data accuracy and availability. As water becomes more scarce, accurate and publicly accessible datasets will become increasingly important to ensure the resource is managed sustainably.

Addressing region-specific water management issues with tailored, high-impact investments.

- **POP 114: Watermaster Staff: Improving Water Management – \$1.6m GF**
Not included in the GRB
Package 114 allows OWRD to bring on additional staff in their Field Services Division in the Klamath and Malheur Lake Basins, two of the areas in the state with the most acute water scarcity issues.
- **POP 115: Supporting Resolution of Complex Issues – \$2.9m GF**
Partial funding in GRB of \$1.5m; recommend full funding

Package 115 allows OWRD to provide expertise, support, data, and information to stakeholders working in basins with complex water management challenges. Additionally, this package includes funding for the negotiations related to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation water rights settlement.

- **POP 119: Studying Springs in Deschutes Basin – \$612k GF**

Not included in the GRB

Package 119 allows OWRD to identify and evaluate springs in the Deschutes Basin. Springs perform a variety of functions, including providing baseflows to rivers and streams, serving as indicators of aquifer health, and creating biodiverse ecosystems. Studying springs in the Deschutes Basin, where surface water and groundwater are highly connected, is critical for water supply management.

Equipping the Department with resources necessary to assure sufficient and sustainable water supplies.

- **POP 106: Water Planning Funding, Support, and Data – \$3.6m GF**

Not included in the GRB

Package 106 allows OWRD to continue building off of and investing in Place-Based Planning—supporting communities across the state in their efforts to develop and implement regionally tailored water management plans within state guidelines.

- **POP 109: Adapting to Climate Change & Drought – \$1.7m GF**

Not included in GRB

Package 109 allows OWRD to take broad steps toward addressing water impacts resulting from climate change. It will be necessary for the Department to have the expertise and capacity to proactively develop and implement mitigation and adaptation activities in response to the short-term effects of drought and long-term effects of climate change.

- **POP 111: Water Use, Supply, and Availability Data – \$2.2m GF**

Partial funding in GRB of \$1.3m; recommend full funding

Package 111 allows OWRD to update the Water Availability and Reporting System and invest in equipment necessary to develop and deliver scientifically robust data used in tools and models. These data can be used to support better informed decision-making, particularly around the allocation and use of the state's water resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,



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