

SB 5506 – Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Dear Legislators:

There are many different priorities you are juggling, but I think making sure we protect and manage our water resources is essential, especially in light of our rapidly changing climate.

I am writing regards to policy option funding packages for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Water Resources Department that relate to managing our precious water supplies to assure there is enough water for fish and wildlife, municipalities, agriculture and all the other water users.

This means we need staff positions to conduct the studies to know the availability of water, figure out the needs for fish and wildlife, understand the stream flows in a changing climate, understand the hydrology and conservation options, generate the data, work with regional collaborates, place stream gauges, and assure there are water masters to enforce rights. In other words we need enough people in these agencies to assure our water resources are protected and managed responsibly.

In light of these needs, for ODFW please:

Assure ODFW's water program isn't cut.

Assure ODFW's POP 107 is funded to allow participation in regional water bodies. (I sit on the MidCoast Water Planning Partnership and without ODFW involved, we are missing a crucial voice for fish and wildlife protection)

Assure ODFW's POP 110 is funded to do stream temperature monitoring.

Assure ODFW's POP 112 related to habitat restoration

Assure ODFW's POP 102 related to OR Conservation Strategy Implementation (that helps prioritize our most crucial needs for fish and wildlife) is funded.

For OWRD we need to make sure that the proposed cuts due to not filling 16 vacancies in critical data and management programs (e.g. for hydrologists, for stream gage and water measurement programs, and water masters) do not move forward. We need more information not less in this critical time.

Please also fund the following policy option packages:

111 – Water use, supply and availability data (key to knowing if water is available for new surface water diversions and protecting stream flows for fish and wildlife)

114- Ground water managers.. in places such as the Klamath and Harney Basins ground water is already critically depleted and we need to increase water master staff to assure responsible use and replenishment.

119- In the Deschutes which receives spring fed flow, we need to understand why spring flows are declining so we can properly manage water.

Thank you for your attention.

Fran Recht

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