

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE
900 Court Street NE, Room H-178
Salem, Oregon 97301
(503) 986-1828



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WAYS AND MEANS

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To: Natural Resources Subcommittee
From: April McDonald, Legislative Fiscal Office
Date: June 10, 2025
Subject: HB 3544 – Relating to water
Work Session Recommendations

HB 3544 establishes a uniform process and timeline for contested case proceedings on new water right and water right transfer applications administered by the Water Resources Department (WRD).

The Water Resources Commission, in coordination with the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH), is directed to adopt rules establishing uniform hearing schedules and procedural standards. These rules must include a 180-day hearing timeline, provisions for remote participation, the use of administrative law judges for settlement, and consistent timelines for determining party status. HB 3544 also revises the requirements for protest submissions, establishes deadlines and criteria for party status requests, limits appeals, and clarifies when contested case hearings must occur.

To implement the provisions of this bill, WRD will require a Natural Resources Specialist 4 (0.75 FTE) at an estimated cost of \$226,420, including position related services and supplies, for the 2025-27 biennium. This position will also be able to address the cumulative impact to the Water Right Services division from the passage of additional measures related to water right transaction processing during the 2025 legislative session.

Amendment

LFO recommends adoption of the –A6 amendment, which appropriates \$226,420 General Fund to the Water Resources Department, Water Right Services division.

MOTION: I move adoption of the –A6 amendment to HB 3544. *(vote)*

Final Subcommittee Action

LFO recommends that HB 3544, as amended by the –A6 amendment, be moved to the Ways and Means Full Committee.

MOTION: I move HB 3544, as amended, to the Full Committee with a do pass recommendation. *(vote)*

Carriers

Full Committee: _____

House Floor: _____

Senate Floor: _____