



Seattle Office

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February 8, 2025

Senator James Manning Jr, Chair, Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs, District 7

Senator Kim Thatcher, Vice Chair, Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs, District 11

Honorable Members of the Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Re: Support for Oregon SB 761 Relating to the Walla Walla River Basin

Dear Senator Manning Jr., Senator Thatcher, and Members of the Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs,

On behalf of Washington Water Trust (WWT), I write in support of SB 761 proposed by Senator Nash and Representatives Levy. WWT is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with over twenty years of experience implementing instream flow projects for the benefit of critical fish species, landowners, and communities in the Walla Walla Basin. WWT serves as the Environmental Alternate on the Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee that is working towards improving streamflows and water supplies in the Basin through the implementation of the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan (WWW2050).

Water management of the bi-state Walla Walla Basin is complex given that Oregon and Washington govern water allocation differently. Historically, WWT's project focus area has been on the portions of the three major tributaries located in Washington due to these challenges around bi-state flow protection. At the invitation of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in 2022, WWT expanded efforts into Oregon, using our expertise in water transactions to prioritize projects higher in the



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watershed that add the most flow and ecological benefit to these rivers through to the Columbia River.

Streamflow and water supply conditions are only expected to worsen in the coming years. This legislation would build upon existing legislation passed in Oregon and Washington that provided a mechanism to co-manage and protect the Basin's water resources and support the implementation of the highest priority projects as identified by the 2050 Plan, including streamflow restoration. These investments are needed to increase future water supply reliability and climate resiliency for fish, farmers, and communities in the Walla Walla Basin, and SB 761 represents an important step in helping us get there.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

James Kraft

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James Kraft

Executive Director, Washington Water Trust