



*Working with community wastewater treatment and stormwater management agencies
across the state to protect Oregon's water quality since 1987.*

81 East 14th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon 97401
(541) 485-0165 www.oracwa.org

February 10, 2025

Representative Helm, Co-Chair
Representative Owens, Co-Chair
Committee Members,
House Committee – Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
900 Court Street NE

Subject: Support for House Bill 2169 – the Water Reuse Policy Development Bill

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens and Members of the Committee:

As the current chair of the Biosolids and Recycled Water Committee of the Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies (ACWA), I am writing to express strong support for House Bill 2169. The ACWA Board works to support public wastewater agencies in their efforts to implement sustainable resource recovery and beneficial reuse of effluent from wastewater treatment facilities. These agencies are committed to finding solutions that provide the greatest benefit to their communities while ensuring sustainable and cost-effective management of public water infrastructure.

Expanding the municipal and industrial reuse of treated wastewater is key to addressing both statewide and regional water needs for capacity, sustainability and resiliency. Recycled water can support industrial processes, irrigation, wetland habitat, and the conservation of both ground and surface waters. While there are over 140 recycled water systems in Oregon, many opportunities still exist for reuse to play a central role in our state's water future. However, many of our member agencies have been hesitant to pursue such projects due to the lack of a clear and reliable permitting pathway.

ACWA's Reuse Steering Committee has collaborated with DEQ over the last several years to evaluate the regulatory framework for expanding reuse water projects that can be readily permitted and economically implemented by communities. Despite DEQ's full support of this effort, competing demands, such as reducing wastewater discharge permit backlogs, have left limited capacity for dedicated focus on the program review.

HB 2010, enacted in 2023, provided limited duration resources and direction to DEQ to consult with wastewater utilities and other state agencies to identify regulatory barriers and develop recommended policy and guidance changes. However, this funding is set to expire at the end of the fiscal biennium. HB 2169 would extend these efforts by making the temporary positions permanent, ensuring ongoing funding from DEQ and the Water Resources Department. These positions will be crucial for completing the ongoing evaluations, developing policy changes, coordinating interagency efforts, providing clear guidance to project applicants, and managing the program's continued implementation.

There is an urgent need for updated water reuse regulations in Oregon. New water quality limits in communities' discharge permits are increasingly pointing to reuse and other beneficial applications of treated wastewater as the most cost-effective solution to meet compliance objectives, while also benefiting local communities and the environment. HB 2169 would ensure that DEQ has the resources and mandate to look to best practices in other states, such as those in the Southwest, where recycled water has played a critical role in addressing water supply challenges. By collaborating with stakeholders, DEQ can remove unnecessary obstacles to the development of recycled water systems in Oregon.

We strongly urge you to support HB 2169, which will help to ensure a sustainable and resilient water future for Oregon. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Dick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frank Dick, PE
Chair, ACWA Biosolids and Recycled Water Committee