

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for HB 2169

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger-McDonald and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2169, an important piece of legislation that will help Oregon better leverage water reuse as a sustainable solution to meet the state's growing water demands.

The Port of Morrow was established in 1959 and has since grown into Oregon's second-largest port, second only to the Port of Portland. Strategically located along the Columbia River, the Port serves as a critical hub for the distribution and export of processed food, forest products, cattle, and dairy products—commodities sourced not only from Oregon but also from Washington, Idaho, and other inland producers. The Port is also home to a variety of food processors that rely on access to water for production, making water reuse a key part of ensuring the long-term sustainability of both the Port and Oregon's agricultural economy.

Water reuse is not new to the Port of Morrow. Since 1986, we have operated an innovative water reuse program under our Department of Environmental Quality water pollution control facility permit (WPCF permit), processing more than 3 billion gallons of industrial wastewater annually for irrigation on five local farms. This program has provided significant benefits to Oregon's agricultural sector, reducing reliance on traditional water sources and chemical fertilizers while supporting sustainable farming practices. The Port has long believed that water reuse should be a core part of Oregon's water policy, and we strongly support HB 2169 as a meaningful step toward advancing this goal.

Oregon faces increasingly complex water challenges, from drought conditions to groundwater shortages and growing agricultural demands. The Port of Morrow applauds this committee's leadership in tackling this issue head-on and encourages the Legislature to ensure that this bill provides clear and effective guidance for implementation.

The Port of Morrow supports HB 2169 and offers the following recommendations to ensure its success:

1. Explicitly Include the Department of Agriculture (ODA) in Section 2
 - As it relates to the Port's WPCF permit, DEQ oversees the treatment and regulation of industrial wastewater.
 - The Port believes that the ODA will play a critical role in Oregon's reuse future as it relates to agriculture and on-farm application and should be a part of the interagency water reuse development team being established in HB 2169.

2. Clearly Define Responsibilities Between Agencies
 - Currently, water oversight is fragmented across multiple agencies. The legislature should establish clear roles and responsibilities for each agency involved in the reuse process.
3. Establish Clear Guidelines for How Water Reuse Will Be Integrated with Existing Programs and Permits
 - Many existing reuse programs, including the Port of Morrow's irrigation program, operate under longstanding permits and agreements. HB 2169 should direct the water reuse team to review how new policies and interagency collaboration will enhance existing permits and programs.

Water is one of Oregon's most valuable resources, and HB 2169 represents a critical opportunity to ensure that water reuse is fully integrated into our state's long-term water strategy. The Port of Morrow strongly supports this bill and looks forward to working with the committee on our proposed recommendations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Mittelsdorf
Executive Director, Port of Morrow