



February 13, 2025

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

RE: Support for HB 3341 - \$5 million in funding for the Drinking Water Source Protection Grant Program

Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, and Members of the Committee:

Friends of the Columbia Gorge (“Friends”) is a non-profit organization with approximately 5,000 members. Friends is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

I am writing today in support of H.B. 3341, which would provide an additional \$5 million in funding for the Drinking Water Source Protection Grant Program for the upcoming biennium (2025-2027) to ensure the continuation of this valuable program. The OWEB Drinking Water Source Protection Grant Program was established with broad bipartisan support in 2023 and plays a vital role in protecting the drinking water supply of small and rural communities across Oregon.

This bipartisan bill would help ensure secure and safe drinking water for communities in Oregon, including the Columbia River Gorge, by providing additional funding for water suppliers to protect, restore, or enhance sources of drinking water through land acquisition and conservation. Many Gorge residents are living in rural communities which will especially benefit from this funding.

There is great demand for this funding in Oregon. A recent survey by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board identified more than \$27 million in project funding needs over the next 5 years for communities across the state.

H.B. 3341 is also a key component of the 2025 Water Package and will provide meaningful support for many communities facing water insecurity. H.B. 3341 would help communities and water suppliers secure plentiful drinking water, increase resilience to climate change, and provide additional funding to protect water resources and public health.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important legislation.

Sincerely,
Madison Kenney
Conservation Organizer