

February 17, 2025

To: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water  
Subject: Support for \$4 Million in Water Equity Funding

**RE: HB 3528 (Water Equity Funding)**

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

My name is Ana Molina, and I am the Advocacy and Systems Director of Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA), a member-based alliance of over 20 urban and rural communities across the state of Oregon. OJTA supports HB 3528 in the allocation of \$4 million to the Water Equity Fund. This funding is critical for Tribes and environmental justice communities in our state who are tirelessly engaged in addressing profound water challenges.

Oregon Just Transition Alliance's Summer 2020 Listening Tour brought together people with disabilities, rural families, people of color, and working folks across the state to gather insights that continue to shape policy efforts today. During the tour, many alliance members and their communities voiced serious concerns about water quality and scarcity in various parts of Oregon, where industrial agriculture and logging have depleted and damaged vital watersheds. Those living and working in agricultural communities shared fears that toxins and other chemicals are contaminating their drinking water, an issue that persists to this day.

Oregon communities face pressing challenges as our water systems bear the weight of aging infrastructure, inadequate investment, and the compounding impacts of climate change. These stressors disproportionately burden frontline or fenceline communities,, further magnifying historical injustices and underscoring the critical necessity for tailored support and investment. The repercussions extend beyond water issues alone; they intertwine with housing concerns and human health, creating a complex web of challenges for our communities. Adequate support is indispensable to navigate these interconnected issues and uplift the resilience of Oregonians in the face of environmental disparities.

The Water Equity Fund has been able to sustain many organizations across the state, including our members. These resources help them build the infrastructure to engage in

the water issues that their communities are facing. By passing HB 3528, the legislature will help ensure that all Oregonians, especially those most impacted, have access to clean and reliable water. This is an investment in health, safety, and resilience for our communities today and for future generations.

I urge you to support HB 3528 and continue investing in water equity for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration,

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