

Submitter: George B Hutchinson
On Behalf Of: SB5543
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Natural Resources
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5543

I write to support this bill which I understand will maintain OWRD's current service levels. Due to climate change and increasing competition for scarce water resources it is of the utmost importance that OWRD have adequate staff to manage Oregon's water. I also urge a rejection of the Package 090 proposed cuts to water data generation as that is essential for responsible water management. However, please do support two Package 090 additions — the Governor's request for additional funds for (1) a one-time investment of \$100,000 for IT for a water use tracking and reporting system, and (2) a one-time investment of \$4.36 million to assist the Department with legal cost to work through important cases.

Also, please support funds to modernize OWRD's IT — There is a real need for mundane but important information technology work. This work is critically important to the public and the agency alike. Funding IT work should be a priority for the state, including: Package 107, Strategic Modernization of IT Systems and Tools: Updating IT will help agency staff, water right holders, and the public. It will also make the agency more efficient and data more accessible. This bill needs to include Package 111, Improving Accessibility of Agency Website: This package would ensure that the OWRD website is up to date with information desired by the public, and ensure transparency and accessibility.