

Submitter: Laura Hanks
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB427

Dear Laura,

Oregon's outdated water laws have long prioritized extraction over protection, and our rivers and fish have paid the price. But right now we can do something about it: by passing Senate Bill 427 and closing a dangerous loophole that currently allows the state to approve applications for water right changes even if they hurt our streams.

Dear Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

I support Senate Bill 427 to safeguard streamflows in water right transfers.

The water in our streams is our state's lifeblood. It grows our salmon and our food, and it fuels our families. It ties us to our neighbors upstream and downstream. It belongs to all of us.

Yet for far too long, an outdated loophole has allowed the Oregon Water Resources Department to approve applications for water right transfers without adequate consideration of whether the change will harm streamflows. Lower water levels in a stream can hurt fish, impair water quality, and decrease scenic and recreation values.

Senate Bill 427 safeguards our streams—and the fish, water quality, and scenic values they support—by ensuring voluntary water right changes won't further diminish streamflows. This narrow fix closes a dangerous loophole and brings modern environmental values into Oregon's outdated water right transfer review process.

I urge your support of SB 427 and the life-sustaining streamflows it will safeguard.

Sincerely, Laura Hanks