

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

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

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

For far too long, an outdated loophole in Oregon law has allowed the Oregon Water Resources Department to approve applications for water right transfers without adequate consideration of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.

Over the last several years with persistent drought in many parts of Oregon, I have read about the strain on our groundwater and aquifer levels due to overly lenient water use applications for well drilling, irrigation , etc. This must be regulated much more strongly if we are to have a liveable, viable Oregon.

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 This narrow fix closes a dangerous loophole and brings modern environmental values into Oregon's outdated water right transfer review process.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