



February 26, 2025

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

Re: Concerns about HB 3106

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and Committee Members,

The Oregon Forest Industries Council supports the concept of a centralized water data portal to improve access to Oregon's water-related information, however we have concerns about HB 3106 and the proposal to house this project within the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Instead, we urge you to consider placing this initiative at Oregon State University's Institute for Water and Watersheds, the state's designated water resources research institute and one of 54 such centers in the U.S.

Several factors have challenged the effectiveness of efforts to develop a statewide water data portal. These include the need for clearer investment strategies, improved coordination between agencies, and broader engagement with key stakeholders in Oregon's natural resource sector. Additionally, ensuring the highest standards in data management, analysis, and interpretation is essential to fostering confidence in the portal's use across industries and state agencies.

Given these complexities, we believe OSU's Institute for Water and Watersheds is the most appropriate and trusted institution to lead this effort. As an academic center accredited by the U.S. Geological Survey, it has the expertise, scientific rigor, and neutral standing to facilitate broad stakeholder collaboration while ensuring that data collection and interpretation adhere to best practices.

We appreciate the opportunity to share these concerns and encourage a thoughtful reassessment of where this important program is housed. A science-driven, transparent, and trusted approach is essential for the success of Oregon's water data portal, and we would welcome the opportunity to support such an effort.

Sincerely,

Oregon Forest Industries Council