



February 27, 2025

Senator Jeff Golden, Chair
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR. 97301

Subject: Oppose Senate Bill 427

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife:

As the Managing Agency for the Willamette Intake Facilities (WIF) Commission, we are writing to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill (SB) 427. The WIF Commission is a multi-agency partnership dedicated to protecting the Willamette River as a drinking water source. The WIF Commission is composed of six partner agencies: the Tualatin Valley Water District (TVWD) and the cities of Hillsboro, Wilsonville, Tigard, Sherwood, and Beaverton. Collectively, our agencies provide nearly 500,000 residents and some of Oregon's largest, high-tech industries with essential drinking water services in Washington and Clackamas counties. We urge you to oppose this bill as written due to its far-reaching, negative effects on the communities we serve.

SB 427 would essentially prohibit the approval of water right transfers for our partnership members. The use of the term "diminishment of streamflow" is excessively broad and introduces unnecessary uncertainty into Oregon's complex water management system. The existing transfer review process already prevents injury to other existing rights, including instream water rights. Furthermore, adding this additional restriction would create significant administrative burdens for a backlogged Oregon Water Resources Department, resulting in even more extensive delays for critical municipal water infrastructure projects. Now is not the time for such regressive policy in the face of Oregon's housing crisis.

Water right transfers are an essential management tool for drinking water providers, allowing us to adapt to changing conditions while maintaining infrastructure to enhance the resiliency of our water supplies. Oregon already has multiple tools in place to protect streamflow, including instream water rights, fish persistence conditions, water management and conservation planning, and municipal water measurement requirements. These existing mechanisms provide strong environmental protection without imposing sweeping and inflexible restrictions on drinking water providers.

Rather than adopting SB 427, we urge the legislature to focus on solutions that enhance water right flexibility while protecting existing water rights and instream flows. The ability for members of the WIF Commission to manage and transfer existing water rights is critical to maintain our resilient and stable water supplies for the communities we serve, especially as we face a future of increased climate impacts and housing needs.



We respectfully ask you to vote against SB 427 and welcome the opportunity to collaborate on future efforts to improve the efficiency and sustainability of Oregon's water resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul L. Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul L. Matthews
Chief Executive Officer
Tualatin Valley Water District
Managing Agency for the WIF Commission