



American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

March 4, 2025

Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 3634 - Support

Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the more than 6,300 members of the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, our collective bargaining chapters at the University of Oregon, Portland State University, Oregon State University, and Oregon Institute of Technology, and our faculty members across Oregon, I ask that you please support HB 3634 .

Oregon's water infrastructure provides businesses and households with access to clean and safe water. This infrastructure, and the workers who maintain and operate it, are invisible until there is a problem. Currently, a large portion of this workforce is nearing retirement, just at a time when new technology and increasing demands are being placed on water systems. Workers can enter many careers in water infrastructure through training, internships, and certificates, and there is also a need for professional and technical career pathways. With new technologies and emerging water contaminants, many of these professions must receive training in chemistry, engineering, environmental sciences, and other disciplines in higher education.

Oregon's higher education institutions are already engaged in water research. The Water Resources Engineering program and Institute for Water and Watersheds at Oregon State University and Portland State University's Water Quality Research Group and Environmental and Water Resources Engineering provide examples. These research programs also train undergraduate and graduate students, and will be an important source of professionals in careers related to clean water in Oregon.

These programs and the tenured professors, who direct programs, and non-tenured research personnel who manage labs and perform hands-on research are funded by a patchwork of state, federal, and local funds, which can leave faculty with a sense of precarity. This can also leave

research and training programs unfunded which are critical to Oregonians and the future of our state. At this moment, federal funding for research and applied science is uncertain, and Oregon needs certainty around water resources and infrastructure, which is what makes HB 3634 so timely and critical. The AAUP-OR supports these hard working faculty and personnel working in every aspect of the research enterprise, and know they will be important players in training the workforce needed to modernize water systems to incorporate new technology, mitigate new contaminants, and cope with climate change.

HB 3634 leverages Oregon's investment in university education and research to solve real-world problems which are critical to our communities and their economic development. I urge you to pass HB 3634.

Thank you for your consideration,
Louisa Hooven
VP of Political Action, AAUP Oregon