

March 12, 2025

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

RE: Position on HB 3342-1

Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ryan Krabill and, on behalf of the Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB), I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 3342 and its proposed amendment. OFB is committed to policies that protect agricultural water use, support private property rights, and ensure responsible stewardship of our shared natural resources. Water is one of Oregon's most valuable assets, and we recognize the importance of a secure and sustainable water future for all Oregonians.

OFB is the state's most inclusive agriculture organization, proudly representing over 6,500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to cattle, cranberries, and timber with operations spanning from just a few acres to thousands, our members utilize all farming methods including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech.

**Support for Administrative Efficiencies and Transparency**

OFB appreciates the bill's efforts to streamline the administration of water rights through electronic document submission and improved public notice procedures. Modernizing these processes has the potential to reduce delays and create a more efficient system for farmers, ranchers, and other water users. Transparency in water right applications and transfers is also important, and we support efforts to ensure that stakeholders remain informed. A well-functioning and predictable water management system is critical to the success of Oregon's agricultural sector, and we welcome discussions on how best to balance efficiency, accessibility, and due process.

**Concerns About Increased Regulatory Burden and Property Rights Implications**

While HB 3342-1 takes steps to improve administrative processes, we have concerns that certain provisions may create new regulatory challenges that could negatively impact agricultural water users. The potential for expanded public protest opportunities and

discretionary transfer denials introduces uncertainty in an area where predictability is essential. Farmers and ranchers depend on timely access to water, and any new requirements that delay or obstruct valid water transactions should be carefully evaluated to ensure they do not create unnecessary barriers to agricultural viability.

Additionally, proposed restrictions in designated critical groundwater areas raise concerns about fairness and scientific justification. While we strongly support efforts to protect and conserve groundwater resources, policies must be based on sound science and clear, measurable criteria. It is essential that regulatory changes recognize the existing investments farmers have made in water efficiency and conservation and ensure that water remains available for agricultural production. The state must be mindful of the consequences of restricting access to water, as it directly affects food production, rural economies, and the long-term sustainability of working lands.

### **Commitment to Constructive Dialogue**

OFB is committed to working collaboratively with lawmakers, agencies, and other stakeholders to ensure that Oregon's water policies support both conservation goals and the long-term viability of the state's agricultural sector. We recognize that water management is a complex issue that requires thoughtful consideration and a balanced approach. While we have concerns about specific provisions in HB 3342-1, we remain open to discussions on how to refine the bill in a way that enhances efficiency, improves transparency, and protects the water security of Oregon's farmers and ranchers. We encourage the Committee to consider amendments that provide greater clarity on transfer denials, ensure that groundwater restrictions are based on science, and structure administrative fees in a way that is fair and equitable. By working together, we can develop policies that strengthen Oregon's water management system while maintaining the flexibility and reliability that agricultural producers need to continue feeding communities and contributing to the state's economy.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and leadership. OFB looks forward to continued dialogue on this important issue, particularly in the context of the broader suite of proposed water policy changes under consideration by the Oregon Legislature. We remain committed to ensuring that Oregon's water policies reflect both the needs of agriculture and the broader public interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan J. Krabill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ryan J. Krabill  
Oregon Farm Bureau