



DATE: March 12, 2025
TO: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources & Water
FROM: Wild Salmon Center
RE: **Support for HB 3342-1 – 21st Century Water Right Process Improvements**

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

Wild Salmon Center supports HB 3342-1 and its carefully tailored water right process improvements to streamline review, minimize speculation, and reduce legal challenges.

Wild Salmon Center is an international nonprofit headquartered in Oregon that has worked with local partners since 1992 to protect and restore the strongest remaining runs of Wild Pacific Salmon. We use science to drive policy, lead planning processes, and support implementation, and we know that the health of our water resources is directly linked to the recovery of our iconic wild fish and the vitality of our communities and economy. Low streamflows and high water temperatures are stressing even our healthiest salmon runs, and these problems are worsening due to climate change and increased human demand for water.

Wild Salmon Center supports the process improvements in the -1 amendments, including:

- Returning applications that cannot be approved in critical groundwater areas, withdrawn areas, or restrictively classified areas;
- Limiting transfers and permit amendments into critical groundwater areas, withdrawn areas, restrictively classified areas, and groundwater management areas;
- Allowing the state to deny new water right applications in groundwater management areas;
- Closing application files due to applicant non-responsiveness after the Department's initial review; and
- Limiting extensions of time to municipal applicants.

In addition to the provisions in the -1 amendments, we would urge the Committee to expand the ability to return applications that cannot be approved to include areas where streams are either fully or over appropriated. This will save time and money, and protect against legal challenges.

Together, these and other provisions of the -1 amendments will help protect groundwater management and restricted areas, limit speculation, protect existing water right holders, reduce the risk of harm to the resource, and increase fairness and transparency.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

2001 NW 19th Avenue, Suite 200 • Portland, Oregon 97209 USA • Tel: 503.222.1804 • Fax: 503.222.1805
info@wildsalmoncenter.org • wildsalmoncenter.org