



CONSOLIDATED OREGON INDIVISIBLE NETWORK

March 19, 2025

Subject: Please vote yes on HB 3114

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair McDonald, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

I am writing on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) which is made up of Indivisible groups across Oregon and has its own Climate Energy Environment (CEE) Team. The CEE Team collaborates with organizations, agencies, and groups across the Pacific Northwest to advocate, in part, for laws and programs that promote and protect our natural world.

Saline lakes (inland salt-water lakes) are depended upon by migratory birds traveling between South America and Canada and Alaska. After flying over vast expanses with no water bodies, they land, feed, and rest in sparsely distributed lakes across the Great Basin. Lake Abert is one of those lakes and in the last 30 years it has often gone dry, unnecessarily. When too much water is diverted upstream, fewer dormant desiccated shrimp under the lakebed are able to come to life and become food for the birds as has happened for thousands of years.

Because of the importance of Lake Abert to bird life, this local water management issue is relevant to the Pacific Flyway of the Western Hemisphere. The issue is important to biodiversity conservationists, birders, saline lake advocates (including Senators Mitt Romney and Jeff Merkley), and citizens who generally support functional ecosystems for the health of the Great Basin. Over 80 % of the global population of one of bird species, the Wilson's phalarope, utilizes Lake Abert. This local stalemate has become a national issue for conservationists because it is widely known that Lake Abert is a critical stopover area for many migratory species.

This issue is also important to those who care about good governance. Oregon Water Resources Department has been reluctant to even monitor the water availability, and ODFW has failed to fully implement their 1990s Chewaucan management plan. We believe the rule of law and the role of democratic institutions matter. Had these 2 principles worked over the past 30 years, contracted facilitation for the current deliberations wouldn't be necessary.

We support efforts to facilitate state agencies in fulfilling their obligations to the citizens of Oregon, as well as their hemispheric roles in keeping migratory birds alive. We also support the goal of seeking consensus among people who may now disagree on the future of the water coming from this river. We ask you to vote YES on HB 3114.

Respectfully,

Deborah Ferrer
On behalf of COIN and the COIN CEE Team
<https://www.coinoregon.com/>