

Submitter: Amy Carlson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1153

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

I support SB1153, which safeguards our life-sustaining streams—including the fish habitat, water quality, and cultural values they support—by ensuring the state doesn't grant permission for voluntary water right changes that further harm fish habitat and water quality. This fix closes a dangerous loophole and brings modern environmental values into Oregon's outdated water right transfer review process.

The bill will require the state to consider impacts to instream habitat and water quality when reviewing proposed water right changes/transfers. The bill also creates new avenues for Tribal involvement, brings in two agencies to the review process (ODFW and DEQ), and clarifies that the state can require measurement and reporting of water use as a condition of approval.

As you know, the water in our streams is our state's lifeblood, growing our salmon and our food and fueling our families--and it belongs to all of us. An outdated loophole has allowed, for far too long, OWRD to approve applications for water right transfers without adequate consideration of whether the change will harm our streams. Lower water levels in a stream can hurt fish, impair water quality, and decrease scenic and recreation values (both upstream and downstream).

I ask that you support of SB 1153 to safeguard fish habitat and water quality in water right transfers. Thank you for your serious consideration.