

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

I am a registered voter in Washington County, Oregon. I'm also a canoe paddler, kayaker, hiker, and birdwatcher. I've been all these and more, since becoming aware of the need for clean water, growing up in Arkansas in the 1960s and 1970s. Hiking and paddling in Oregon for the last 20+ years has not changed my mind.

I am writing in support for SB1153.

Recently I wrote in opposition to HB 3501, which would prohibit the Water Resources Agency from consideration of the public interest in water rights transfers. SB1153 seems to be the bill HB3501 is meant to fend off.

As I wrote then: Isn't it the literal job of government to protect the public interest?

The folks the People of Oregon hire to determine the issues around water rights should of course consider what, if any, damage or injury to water quality or habitat would occur if a water right is transferred to another user. This proposal would help make sure that consideration occurs.

This proposal also brings the Tribes into the conversation. I welcome their involvement.

It also gives the Department the ability to have certain water quality and habitat protection measures taken in order to grant a water rights transfer. In other words, the Department is not just a rubber stamp.

In the comments to HB3501, one of the very few comments in favor of that bill, a person representing a group of nursery owners, spoke to the fact that water rights transfer cases can often take months or years to work through the process. He said: "Changing Oregon transfer laws to add a public interest test is a monumental step that will have ramifications for years to come. Such a change would need to be considered as part of a broader set of issues."

He is correct, as far as that particular quote goes. It's a monumental step, it'll have ramifications for years, and should be "considered as part of a broader set of issues." Unfortunately that "broader set of issues" doesn't seem to be up for consideration

during this legislative term, or at least not in this bill. Maintaining the status quo; in other words, doing nothing so that a better fix can maybe be worked out somewhere by someone in the future, is a recipe for getting nothing done. It's a recipe for continued habitat loss and water quality degradation. I think we've had enough of that, going back years, decades, generations.

I support SB1153, I support this bill being moved out of committee and voted and signed into law, during this current legislative session.

Thank you.