

Submitter: Scott Jacobson
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 Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire,

I write to you today to urge you to oppose SB 1153.

SB 1153 threatens Oregon's ability to manage water efficiently and responsibly. It ignores existing public review requirements currently required in OWRD's water rights transfer process. By adding more layers of bureaucratic review, the bill would have a chilling effect on the efficient use of water throughout our state through the threat of litigation from activist third parties. This threatens water rights at a time when new water rights are not available. A water right transfer is required whenever a water right holder seeks a change in point of diversion, point of appropriation, type of use, place of use, or any combination of these.

This bill would severely restrict water users' ability to adapt to changing conditions by imposing vague and broad environmental assessments. SB 1153 would also open the door to years-long delays and costly litigation from third parties without improving environmental protections. SB 1153 adds new, duplicative standards to a process already governed by strict anti-injury and anti-enlargement rules. The Oregon Water Resources Department is already stretched thin—this bill would add to an already overburdened system for no benefit to anyone. Not the environment, not state agencies, and certainly not for agriculture! This bill comes at a time when the OWRD is already seeking to increase water user fees by 135%! In addition, it opens the door to years-long delays and costly litigation from third parties without actually making any difference in environmental protections.

Again, I urge you to oppose SB 1153.

Sincerely,
Scott Jacobson