



City of Hood River  
211 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Hood River, OR 97031

Farmers Irrigation District  
1985 Country Club Road  
Hood River, OR 97031

Crystal Springs Water District  
3006 Chevron Drive  
Hood River, OR 97031

City of the Dalles  
313 Court Street  
The Dalles, OR 97058

Middle Fork Irrigation District  
8235 Clear Creek Road  
Parkdale, OR 97041

Ice Fountain Water District  
1375 San Giorgio Road  
Hood River, OR 97031

East Fork Irrigation District  
3500 Graves Road  
Hood River, OR 97031

March 24, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife

RE: Testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 1153

To Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, Senator Girod, Senator Prozanski, and Senator Taylor,

The City of Hood River, City of The Dalles, Crystal Springs Water District, East Fork Irrigation District, Farmers Irrigation District, Ice Fountain Water District, and Middle Fork Irrigation District provide agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and fire protection water throughout the Hood River Valley and the surrounding region. We are submitting joint comments based on our shared knowledge of water management in the Hood River Basin, as well as our shared acknowledgement of the collaboration and flexibility that will be needed within our region to continue to serve the needs of our community over the next century.

As water managers, we know how critical the ability to transfer places of use, points of diversion, and points of appropriation can be to addressing changing service needs, balancing a diversity of in-stream and out-of-stream uses, building climate change resiliency, and more. The Hood River Watershed is a geologically active basin, which has required relocation and rebuilding of points of diversion multiple times in our history (Middle Fork and Farmers irrigation districts both recently faced this after a 2006 debris flow, events that are predicted to increase in frequency as a result of climate change and glacial recession). Many of us use place of use transfers regularly to respond to the changing development patterns in our cities and unincorporated areas. Senate Bill 1153 would make it significantly harder, to potentially impossible, for our Basin to respond to a changing environment and the needs of our community.

Senate Bill 1153 opens up both temporary and permanent transfers to third-party protests, allowing outside groups to re-litigate all existing water rights they may not like. The vague and undefined language of "loss of instream habitat" and "contribute to water quality impairment" make it easy for this bill to open up transfers to

requiring long, complicated, and expensive data gathering and analysis (something neither water right holders nor OWRD staff have capacity for), protracted and expensive protests (which already have a years to decades long backlog), and/or a functional moratorium on timely and responsive transfers. Transfers are a critical tool for water right holders and water managers to respond to changing geologic, environmental, social, and economic conditions, that are likely to be significantly complicated, delayed, curtailed, or lost if Senate Bill 1153 is approved. Even just the prospect of years-long protests and/or difficult demands on existing water rights, that the community has relied on over the last 150 years, disincentivizes water right holders from managing water most efficiently.

The Hood River Basin needs a more responsive, timely, and flexible water rights landscape to meet our changing world, not a more expensive, complicated, delayed, confusing, and litigated water rights landscape. All users (cities, rural residential, commercial and industrial, and agriculture) need water security for long-term planning and responsible investment.

We urge you to vote against Senate Bill 1153, and hope there will be significantly more engagement with water managers throughout the state in any future conversations around possible changes to the operations and implementation of Oregon's water rights management processes.

Thank you,

City of Hood River

City of The Dalles

Crystal Springs Water District

East Fork Irrigation District

Farmers Irrigation District

Ice Fountain Water District

Middle Fork Irrigation District