

March 25, 2025



Senator Golden, Chair
Senator Nash, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

Re: SB 1153 Opposition

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Committee Members:

My name is Tom Fessler with Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas, and we are a third-generation grower in the Willamette Valley, farming roughly 2500 acres. We grow nursery stock, grass seed, and other row crops. We employ around 240 employees, many of whom have worked for us for decades.

I am **opposed to SB 1153** because it threatens our farm's ability to continue on to the next generation. Access to water is critical to the crops grown in the Willamette Valley, and this bill would greatly restrict the tools available to utilize this critical resource.

Our system of senior water rights is critical for agriculture in Oregon, as it allows us to develop long-term crops, plan our crop rotations, and grow some of the highest quality crop commodities in the world.

With limited or nearly no access to new water rights, water transfers are really the only means left for dependable access to water for agriculture. This bill makes a burdensome process nearly impossible and will almost certainly eliminate the ability to transfer water rights as well.

We have worked over the years to do everything we can to increase water efficiency, plant crops that are less water intensive, and transfer water rights to better utilize this precious resource. This bill would only harm our ability to continue progress.

I urge you to **oppose SB 1153**.

Sincerely,

Tom Fessler
Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas
Woodburn, OR