



March 26, 2025

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

On behalf of the City of Central Point, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 1153.

SB 1153 introduces a range of new restrictions and regulatory hurdles that, while aimed at protecting aquatic habitat and water quality, would have unintended and far-reaching consequences for cities across Oregon—particularly when it comes to securing and maintaining access to drinking water.

Cities are responsible for providing reliable, clean water to residents, businesses, schools, and emergency services. That responsibility becomes increasingly complex as we grow, respond to climate pressures, and work to improve infrastructure. SB 1153 would make that job dramatically harder.

The bill imposes new prohibitions on water right transfers if there's any potential loss of in-stream habitat or contribution to water quality impairment. These standards are vague, difficult to quantify, and ripe for challenge—creating an environment where nearly every transfer needed to deliver water to growing communities could be contested or delayed. That kind of uncertainty is devastating to cities.

Without clarity or predictability in the water rights transfer process, we cannot plan effectively for population growth, economic development, or emergency preparedness. Basic city functions—like building new housing, upgrading schools, or attracting businesses—depend on knowing we can access sufficient water. Under SB 1153, cities could be stuck in limbo for years, unable to move forward on essential public works.

And while litigation drags on, the costs grow. Construction delays and legal expenses fall squarely on the shoulders of our residents through increased utility rates, tax impacts, and reduced services. SB 1153 doesn't just slow down development—it raises costs and limits opportunity for every family and business in our community.

We fully support responsible water management and tribal consultation, but this bill does not strike the right balance. It shifts the burden of Oregon's complex water challenges onto municipalities and the people we serve—without offering a workable path forward.

For these reasons, the City of Central Point respectfully urges you to oppose SB 1153. Let's protect Oregon's waterways without putting our cities and our residents at risk.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Clayton,



City of Central Point, City Manager