

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

SB 1153 appears to be a solution in search of a problem, posing significant risks to Oregon's capacity for efficient and responsible water management through water rights transfers, especially at a time when new water rights are not accessible. The bill introduces unnecessary bureaucratic layers to the existing water rights transfer process, which already includes public review requirements mandated by the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD). This could lead to a chilling effect on water usage efficiency, as it opens the door to potential litigation from activist groups who support the bill. Furthermore, OWRD is currently facing a backlog of work and is even considering a 135% increase in water user fees, making it ill-equipped to manage additional burdens.

The implications of this bill are concerning:

- It limits flexibility by imposing vague and broad environmental assessments, which would hinder water users' ability to adapt to evolving conditions.
- It increases litigation risk, potentially resulting in lengthy delays and significant costs for third-party challenges, without enhancing environmental protections.
- Lastly, SB 1153 introduces redundant and unnecessary standards to an already stringent process governed by existing anti-injury and anti-enlargement regulations