



OREGON GROUND WATER ASSOCIATION

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**HB 2165
Testimony in Support
Before the
House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
March 31, 2025**

Co-Chairs Helm, Owens, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2165.

The mission of the Oregon Ground Water Association is to promote sustainable groundwater development and management for maximum beneficial use without waste or contamination. Organized in 1949, the Association has sought to encourage responsible stewardship of the groundwater resource with its leadership in industry education and legislation.

The Oregon Ground Water Association (OGWA) is a nonprofit membership organization composed of water well constructors, well pump and water treatment contractors, hydrogeologists and engineers, manufacturers and suppliers of equipment, and other various trades engaged with the groundwater resource. From these various disciplines, we have the benefit of receiving many perspectives on proposed legislation.

In 2021, HB 2145 increased the start card fee from \$225 to \$350. This session, the Oregon Water Resources Department is proposing to again increase that fee by 22 percent, from \$350 to \$427. The Department asserts that, without this increase, there will be a \$975,000 shortfall in the well construction program. HB 2165 allocates a comparatively modest one-time general fund investment of \$830,415 for 2.25 FTEs dedicated to well construction and compliance.

The danger of skyrocketing costs to consumers may have devastating results. The OGWA is asking the legislature to demonstrate its commitment to the sustainability and availability of groundwater by investing in one of Oregon's most precious resources. Due to the high and ever increasing costs associated with drilling a well, our members have seen blatant attempts to sidestep the regulatory process which can easily result in improperly constructed wells which can have serious negative impacts on the quantity and quality of groundwater, streams, lakes and other waters.

Additionally, new administrative rules adopted by the Water Resources Commission in September of 2024 severely limit future appropriations of groundwater which will result in the construction of fewer wells (and, consequently, fewer fees to support the start card fund).

The OGWA strongly encourages the Committee address these concerns by supporting HB 2165 and we thank you in advance for your careful consideration.
