



WaterWatch of Oregon

Protecting Natural Flows In Oregon Rivers

SB 5009 ODFW BUDGET

Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon
By Kimberley Priestley

**Submitted to the Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee
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Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers and aquifers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes, wetlands, groundwater dependent ecosystems and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources.

Safeguard ODFW's Water Quality and Water Quantity Program: ODFW's Water Program plays a vital role in protecting water in our state's iconic rivers. Adequate funding of ODFW's Water Program is critical to meeting the many instream recommendations of the state's Integrated Water Resources Strategy. Whether it's working to protect water instream, prioritizing streamflow restoration efforts statewide, working in basin collaborative groups, helping develop water policy or working with OWRD to solve complex regional water issues, ODFW's work is critical to fish and wildlife, cultures, communities and economies across the state. To support this work we are respectfully requesting the Legislature prioritize funding for the following:

- **Maintain current service levels for ODFW's Water Quality and Quantity Program (No cuts)**
- **ODFW POP 101, Instream Water Right and Land Use Resolutions (\$300 GF, fully funded in GRB)**

Conclusion: Eighteen out of nineteen of Oregon's river basins are already over appropriated from the late spring to the early fall. At the same time, population growth and climate change are increasing pressures on Oregon's rivers and other aquatic habitats. Oregon's fish and other aquatic species across the state are imperiled; climate change will only make the challenges Oregon's aquatic species are facing worse.

In the face of these increasing pressures, protection of Oregon's iconic fish and wildlife, and the habitats they depend on, is more important than ever. As such we would urge the Joint Ways and Means Committee to protect the Water Program from cuts a further invest in POP 101.

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