



Natural Resource Organization Concerns on SB 1154

Senate Bill 1154 proposes changes to Oregon’s groundwater protection statutes, including **changes involving at least 6 different state agencies (DEQ, ODA, OWRD, DLCD, OHA, DOGAMI)**. The bill also proposes changes to agency processes including agency and local community responses to areas of groundwater concern and management. More broadly, its proposed changes touch on many other major policy areas including **water and private property rights, and land use and development**. This bill is being described as a **“Groundwater Quality Act Reform Bill,”** but dropped late in session with no meaningful discussion or prior engagement with stakeholders.

With statewide implications across so many agencies, stakeholders have not had enough time to understand the goals, intent, and impacts of this bill. Although the stated intent is to clarify roles and authorities, aspects of this bill could have negative impacts to agriculture, business, local residents, and communities. **It also imposes significant new responsibilities on state agencies that will require new capacity funding.**

We generally support the idea of improving the GWMA process. However, a concept like this deserves, and would benefit from, a more in-depth discussion than we have been able to have in the few weeks since this bill was introduced. SB 1154 should be simplified to the stated purpose of clarifying agency roles and authorities rather than a rushed overhaul of Oregon’s Groundwater Protection statutes without consultation with the regulated community or other impacted stakeholders.