



Institute for Tribal Government

CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE
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April 18, 2025

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Kate Lieber and Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Vice Chair Senator Fred Girod, Representatives David Gomberg and Greg Smith, and members of the Joint Ways and Means committee:

Written Testimony Re: Support for \$4 Million in Water Equity Funding

My name is Direlle Calica, and I am writing because on behalf of the Institute for Tribal Government and our partnership with the Affiliated Tribes of NW Indian's, Changing Currents Initiative (Changing Currents). Changing Currents is an initiative to foster deeper, collective dialogue about water protection & its importance to tribal communities, our neighbors, and government partners. We support HB 3528 as it is a critical step in addressing Oregon's water challenges for all Oregonians.

Water is a highly critical and invaluable resource for many tribal communities and is a resource that is at the heart of tribal culture, spirituality, and society. Tribes' generally view their relationship to the water and other natural resources as one of stewardship. The key principle in this stewardship approach is "to leave the resource better than when you found it." Today, stewardship to water and natural resources is becoming difficult as the demands and pressures on these resources increases, particularly in the face of a global pandemic and climate change impacts.

In recent years, Oregon's water systems are under increasing pressure due to aging infrastructure, climate change, and long-standing underinvestment. These challenges disproportionately impact communities—tribal nations, rural areas, low-income families, and communities of color—who often lack the resources to address water crisis effectively.

Rooted in traditional wisdom and understanding, our water leaders have a responsibility to uphold Tribal water rights and ensure our communities' future wellbeing and prosperity . It is our shared responsibility to adapt and proactively respond to the effects of climate change by demanding an inclusive and reflective water policy agenda. Time and time again, Tribal prosperity has always benefited our neighbors and partners economically, socially, and culturally. We look forward to finding ways to share in the benefits of access to healthy, clean, and abundant water resources in our state.

HB 3528 provides \$4 million in funding to support much-needed research and grants: \$3.2 million to the University of Oregon for research and grants that help communities address water challenges. \$800,000 to Portland State University's Institute for Tribal Governments to support tribal-led water solutions.

By passing HB 3528, the Legislature will help ensure that all Oregonians, especially those most impacted, have access to clean and reliable water. This is an investment in health, safety, and resilience for our communities today and for future generations.

I urge you to support HB 3528 and continue investing in water equity for all Oregonians. Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Direlle Calica". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Direlle Calica, J.D.
Director
Institute for Tribal Government