

April 18, 2025

**To:** Joint Committee on Ways & Means

**Subject:** Support for \$4 Million in Water Equity Funding

Co-Chairs Senator Kate Lieber and Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Vice Chair Senator Fred Girod, Representative David Gomberg and Greg Smith, and members of the committee,

My name is Rayna Viles, and I am writing as a tribal member of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in support of HB 3528.

The health of our waterways is vital for Native populations to continue practicing our lifeways which are closely linked to community wellness. Healthy water systems are the life blood of first foods and continuation of our culture. Furthermore, the crisis of drinkable water not being accessible to many of our most impacted communities across the state is an urgent matter.

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.

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 the basic human right for all Oregonians to have access to clean water and that tribal communities are being included in the conversation as we work towards a healthier water future.

I urge you to support HB 3528 and continue investing in water equity for all Oregonians. I urge you to honor your commitment to the first peoples of the land you inhabit.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,  
Rayna Viles