



Joint Subcommittee On Capital Construction
Testimony in Support of SB 5531 – Section 9
Submitted by Farmers Conservation Alliance
May 9, 2025

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 5531, and specifically Section 9, which allocates \$20 million to the Oregon Water Resources Department's Water Supply Development Account.

This investment is essential to the continued progress of irrigation infrastructure modernization across Oregon. The funding supports irrigation districts in developing projects that range from initial feasibility studies to full construction. These are not hypothetical efforts—they are shovel-ready or soon-to-be-ready projects that will deliver long-term benefits to agriculture, rural communities, the environment, and fish and wildlife.

Many of the irrigation modernization projects supported by this program are geared toward multi-benefit. That means they don't just improve water delivery for agriculture; they also enhance instream flows for fish, improve water quality, build climate resilience, and strengthen local economies. These are collaborative efforts, often developed in partnership with conservation groups, tribes, state and federal agencies, and local communities.

This type of funding is exactly what is needed as irrigation districts face growing pressures from drought, aging infrastructure, and increased demand across users. Continued funding through the Water Supply Development Account provides the necessary resources to design, plan, and build 21st-century irrigation systems that benefit agriculture, communities, and ecosystems.

Urge your support for SB 5531 and this critical investment in Oregon's irrigation future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie O'Shea".

Julie O'Shea
Executive Director
Farmers Conservation Alliance