

Submitter: Bryan Sohl
On Behalf Of: WaterWatch of Oregon
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1153

Please vote YES on Senate Bill 1153 to safeguard streamflows in water right transfers.

The water in our streams is our state's lifeblood. It grows our salmon and our food, and it fuels our families. It ties us to our neighbors upstream and downstream. It belongs to all of us.

Yet for far too long, an outdated loophole has allowed the Oregon Water Resources Department to approve applications for water right transfers without adequate consideration of whether the change will harm streamflows.

Senate Bill 1153 helps to safeguard our streams — and the fish, wildlife, and water quality values they support — by ensuring a narrow subset of proposed water right changes won't further diminish flows in unprotected streams. For non-municipal users, this will help guard against harm for most proposed upstream stream diversion changes or movement of groundwater wells within a quarter mile of streams.

This bill also enhances existing processes for tribal consultation with a goal of identifying and addressing potential impacts to tribal interests in water.

I urge your support of SB 1153 and the life-sustaining streamflows it will safeguard.

Sincerely,

Bryan D Sohl MD
Ashland OR
Board Member, WaterWatch of Oregon