

Submitter:

Walt Mintkeski

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1153

As an outdoor recreationalist since moving to Oregon in 1972, I support Senate Bill 1153 to safeguard fish habitat and water quality when considering 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. However, an outdated loophole has allowed the Oregon Water Resources Department to approve applications for water right transfers without adequate consideration of whether the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 our streams. Lower water levels in a stream can hurt fish, impair water quality, and decrease scenic and recreation values.

Senate Bill 1153 safeguards our rivers and the fish habitat, water quality, and the cultural values which they support, by ensuring the Oregon Water Resources Department does not grant permission for voluntary water right changes that further harm fish habitat and water quality. This fix closes a dangerous loophole and brings modern environmental values into Oregon's outdated water right transfer review process.

I urge you to support of SB 1153. Thank you.