

Submitter:

Katherine Merrell

On Behalf Of:

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Yet for far too long, an outdated loophole has allowed the Oregon Water Resources Department to approve applications for water right transfers without adequate consideration of whether the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. Lower water levels in a stream can hurt fish, impair water quality, and decrease scenic and recreation values.

Senate Bill 1153 safeguards our streams—and the fish, water quality, and scenic values they support—by ensuring a narrow subset of proposed non-municipal water right changes won't further diminish flows in unprotected 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,

Kate Merrell