



Representative Ken Helm, Co-Chair
Representative Mark Owens, Co-Chair
Representative Sarah Finger-McDonald, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
State Capital, Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 4006

February 6, 2026

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair Finger-McDonald and Members of the Committee.

Founded in 1968, Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance equitable, innovative and collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

While OEC is neutral on HB 4006, we are pleased that the committee is holding a hearing on the bill on February 9, 2026.

Our state faces increasing pressures on our water resources from climate change-related shifts in precipitation patterns, and increased demand for groundwater resources from industry, municipalities and agriculture. To address those challenges in ways that ensure the sustainability of our water resources while supporting communities as they work to increase their environmental and economic resilience, we will need to consider geographically-specific projects that are tailored to the needs of specific communities, regions and basins.

This will not be easy. It will require flexibility and a willingness to consider new and different ways of approaching familiar problems. It will require creative uses of new technologies, and an ongoing commitment to accurate, reliable and comprehensive data collection. It will require accountability in word and deed, in order to protect our water and land resources, our rural and urban communities, the natural environment, and existing water and property rights. It will require us to rebuild trust where trust has been eroded.

The Legislature must be willing to grapple with tough, complex questions as our state seeks a way forward. Thank you, Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair Finger-McDonald and members of the committee for being willing to step into this conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen Lewotsky'.

Karen Lewotsky
Water Program Director & Rural Partnerships Lead