

March 27, 2013

Testimony to the Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee
From members of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy Policy Advisory Group

Supporting Oregon Water Resources Department Budget, SB 5547

Co-chairs Edwards and Unger, and members of the Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee:

We, the undersigned, worked closely with the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) and other natural resource agencies over the course of two years to develop the state's first ever long-term water management plan, the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS). As members of the IWRS policy advisory group, we brought together our different perspectives to ensure that our state has a strategy for managing our precious water resources to meet in-stream and out of stream needs well into the future.

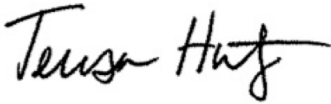
As part of the IWRS development process, we identified substantial gaps and needs that threaten our economy and our environment if they are not addressed. These include gaps in knowledge about the status of our water resources, especially groundwater; the need to improve coordination of monitoring and data analysis among Oregon's natural resource agencies; improving water use measurement and updating water records; better understanding in-stream and out of stream water needs; assessing the likely impacts of climate change on our water resources; meeting water needs through water development projects as well as conservation and efficiency; and conducting long-term water planning at the local level.

Now that we have a long-term water strategy to address these needs, we need to implement it, which will require funding. The Governor's Balanced Budget includes several Policy Option Packages for OWRD that were created expressly to implement the IWRS, such as:

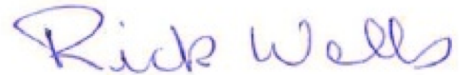
- 101 and 103: Water use reporting and measurement device cost-share
- 102: Hydrologist
- 201: IWRS Implementation
- 202: Groundwater basin investigations
- 203: Restore field staff (watermasters)
- 204: Establish a statewide water supply development program
- 205: Continue water supply development in the Columbia-Umatilla Basin
- 206: Feasibility grants for water conservation, storage and reuse projects
- 207: Update water right certificates

We believe that water is such a vital resource to this state that we cannot afford not to make wise investments in water resources management and development. We respectfully request that you prioritize these water funding packages as you make budgeting decisions.

Sincerely,



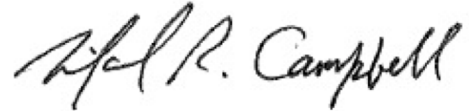
Teresa Huntsinger
Oregon Environmental Council




Rick Wells
Monrovia Nursery



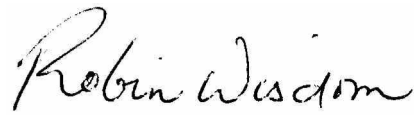
Dennis Doherty
Umatilla County Commission



Michael Campbell
Stoel Rives LLP



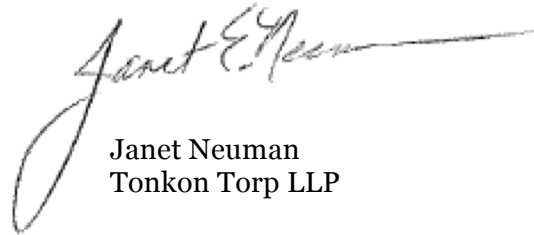
Tod Heisler
Deschutes River Conservancy



Robin Wisdom
League of Women Voters



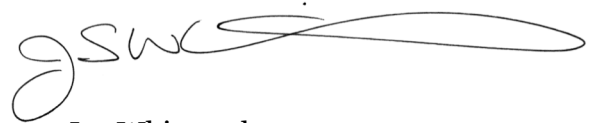
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