

April 10, 2013



OREGON
ASSOCIATION OF
NURSERIES



The
Freshwater Trust*



Oregon
Environmental
Council
It's Your Oregon



To: Chair Dingfelder, Vice-chair Olsen, and members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

RE: Support for In-Conduit Hydro and Establishment of Fish Passage Fund, SB 837

Dear Chair Dingfelder, Vice-Chair Olsen, and members of the Committee:

We are writing to voice our support of SB 837, which will fund fish passage restoration while helping Oregon meet its renewable energy goals in an environmentally responsible manner. We are a diverse group of water users, conservation groups, municipalities and water stakeholders with a common goal: to advocate for common sense water policies that move Oregon's economy, communities, and environment toward a secure water future.

With the adoption of Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) in 2012, now is the time to capitalize on momentum and enact water policy for Oregon that creates jobs to help grow our economy, keeps our cities healthy, strengthens vital agricultural production, and protects and enhances our environmental assets. Toward this end, we are focused on three key areas: water supply management, conservation, and water quality.

SB 837 advances these goals and supports the IWRS recommendations to "Take advantage of existing infrastructure to develop hydroelectric power," and "Protect and restore instream habitat and habitat access for fish and wildlife." This bill will allow in-conduit hydropower projects to move forward in an environmentally safe and economically feasible manner while creating a dedicated and meaningful funding source for fish passage restoration projects. In-conduit hydropower is installed in a screened water delivery canal or pipeline to generate clean renewable energy and does not use any additional water beyond what is already allowed under the existing water right. These projects are also often part of piping or other water conservation projects that yield even more instream benefits for fish and wildlife. Providing an option for in-conduit hydropower projects to contribute to a statewide fund for fish passage will enhance fish restoration efforts while maintaining the economic viability of the projects.

Please support SB 837 and help Oregon meet its co-equal goals of fish restoration and renewable energy generation.

Sincerely,

*The Freshwater Trust
The Nature Conservancy
Oregon Environmental Council*

*Special Districts Association of Oregon
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Oregon Water Resources Congress*