



## **Statement in opposition to HB 2620**

House Committee on Consumer Protection and Government Efficiency

March 12, 2013

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Founded in 1985, WaterWatch of Oregon is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources.

WaterWatch opposes HB 2620. We are especially concerned about the breadth of this bill as it relates to water management. The waters of this state, by statute, belong to all Oregonians. It is a state resource that should be managed at the state level. While we support the idea of regional planning and local stakeholder input into that planning, we have grave concerns about regional and/or community based "governance". The water laws of this state are complex. Instream interests are underrepresented. Development and climate change are putting increasing pressure on our rivers. Because the needs of distinct "communities" might not always align with the broader interests of all citizens of this state, HB 2620's direction to "align" state agency activities with priorities established at the regional and community level could lead to unbalanced management of our water resources.

WaterWatch opposes HB 2620 because by relegating governance of Oregon's waters to the local level, it ignores the importance of our rivers to all Oregonians, regardless of where they reside.

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