

February 14, 2013



OREGON  
ASSOCIATION OF  
NURSERIES



**To:** Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Esquivel and McKeown, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

**RE:** Support for House Bill 2259

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Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Esquivel and McKeown, and members of the Committee:

We are writing to voice our support for HB 2259. 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 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.

House Bill 2259 advances these goals by adequately funding the Water Resources Department's water rights transactions. The current transaction fees, last modified in 2009, are scheduled to sunset in 2013. If this occurs, fees will revert back to 2003 levels, which would substantially decrease staff and increase backlogs and processing time. This has the potential to immediately and significantly impact Oregon's economy.

The adjustments proposed in HB 2259 increase transaction fees by approximately 13%, which restores a 50%/50% balance between income from fees and general fund for the transactions program. We support maintaining this 50%/50% split. Please support HB 2259 to provide adequate funding for processing water rights transactions.

Sincerely,

*The Freshwater Trust*

*The Nature Conservancy*

*Oregon Environmental Council*

*Special Districts Association of Oregon*

*League of Oregon Cities*

*Oregon Association of Nurseries*

*Oregon Water Resources Congress*