



HB 2813
Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon
Submitted to the House Committee on Energy and Environment
March 19, 2013

Founded in 1985, WaterWatch 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 supports HB 2813

HB 2813 would declare as a noxious weed the plant species *Arundo donax*, commonly known as giant cane or giant reed.

Giant cane is a threat to Oregon's rivers. It is highly invasive weed that spreads rapidly, displacing native vegetation. Riparian and other wetland habitats are especially susceptible to invasion by giant cane—which can spread through flood, root growth and even errant stem dispersal.

The extremely rapid growth and dense growth habit of giant reed results in reduction in native plant diversity. Giant cane provides neither food nor habitat for native species of wildlife. Riverine habitat dominated by giant cane tend to have warmer water temperatures, which results in lower oxygen concentrations and lower diversity of aquatic animals, including fishes. All in all, giant cane is a threat to Oregon's imperiled salmon and steelhead.

By virtue of its growth characteristics, adaptations to disturbance, especially fire, its lack of natural predators and competitors in North America, and its unsuitability as food or habitat for native wildlife, giant cane has established itself as one of the primary threats to native riparian habitats in the western United States.

WaterWatch supports HB 2813 that would designate *Arundo donax* as an invasive species and prohibit the growing or harvesting of the weed as a commercial agricultural or horticultural activity.