

Testimony before the House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use and Water  
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### **Support for HB 4113**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) supports HB 4113 because it establishes a process for creating a comprehensive and proactive plan to minimize impacts of drought on our state's communities, economy, wildlife and habitat.

Although our state's climate is thought of as abundantly wet, Oregon's summers are consistently dry, even west of the Cascades. In many places, more water has been promised than our rivers can deliver while still sustaining fish habitat. In addition, groundwater levels have declined in several basins.

Population growth and climate change will add additional pressure on these resources in the coming decades and periods of drought are likely to grow in frequency and severity. Using our water resources more wisely will be essential as the state adapts to an uncertain future.

HB 4113 is critical because it allows stakeholders to look at drought as a "familiar common enemy" that unites us, rather than a natural disaster that makes winners and losers. By establishing a Drought Emergency Response Task Force, experts can work together to evaluate existing tools for managing dry years and develop options for minimizing future drought impacts.

Specifically, OEC appreciates that HB 4113 recognizes the importance of data and information sharing in anticipating future impacts, as well as the consideration given to future needs of fish and wildlife.

OEC supports collaborative solutions based on sound science, economic analysis and life cycle thinking. By building on the Integrated Water Resources Strategy and the expertise of local, diverse stakeholders, this bill facilitates exactly the kind of process that will set Oregon apart as a leader on planning for drought.