



**HB 4012A**  
**Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon**  
**Submitted to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means**  
**Subcommittee on General Government**

**February 24, 2016**

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 opposes HB 4012A.**

What HB 4012A does: As written, HB 4012A establish a "Water Quality Monitoring Fund" for the purpose of conducting or funding water quality monitoring or analysis related to removal of dams, and allows the reimbursement of local governments for expenses incurred through water quality monitoring or analysis related to the removal of dams. The bill also authorizes an unnamed amount of lottery funds to deposit in this fund.

WaterWatch opposes HB 4012A for the following reasons:

HB 4012-2 would expend unknown amounts of taxpayer money without first establishing need: The bill presumes a problem where none has been established by facts or data.

Extensive state and federal dam removal permitting processes already ensure the protection of the public, health, safety and welfare: Before a dam can be removed, a joint Section 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers and removal-fill permit from the Oregon Department of State Lands is required. These permits require sediment testing in accordance with a Sediment Evaluation Framework put together by the Sediment Evaluation Team, which in the Pacific Northwest includes the Corps (lead), EPA – Region 10 (co-lead), National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and Washington Department of Ecology. The analyses required to get these permits are expensive and rigorous and assure that sediment released will not cause a health hazard to people or wildlife. Additionally, in Oregon, dam removal requires 401 Water Quality Certification from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, which requires DEQ to ensure dam removal activities will meet water quality standards established by the state under the Clean Water Act. By ensuring a project does not degrade water quality, Oregon's waters remain safe for a wide range of uses, such as drinking water, recreation, fish habitat, aquatic life, and irrigation.

Conclusion: WaterWatch hopes that the Committee will carefully review the facts of this matter and conclude that this measure is unnecessary.

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