



HB 2496

**Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon
By Kimberley Priestley
Submitted to the House Energy and Environment Committee
March 15, 2017**

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 2496

At a time when natural resource agencies are facing possible 15% cuts, which would gut many critical services that serve Oregonians statewide, HB 2496 proposes to grant \$452,390 of general fund dollars to River Docs, LLC to implement the first phase of a sediment study of the lower Rogue River. In the current budget climate, we do not believe that granting general funds to a private consultant is a prudent investment for the state.

Moreover, it is our understanding that the USGS has done such a study on the section of river this study would cover (see <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2011/1280/pdf/ofr20111280.pdf> . If more information is needed, it would seem prudent for the state to work with USGS to update the information they already have rather than pay limited general funds to a private consultant.

In conclusion, with limited general funds and potential devastating cuts to natural resource agencies and other state programs that benefit all Oregonians, we would urge the Committee to vote no on HB 2496.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

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