



POLK COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Commissioners
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Administrative Officer

Joint Sub-Committee on Natural Resources

Re: SB 5542 support testimony

April 13, 2017

Co-Chairs Frederick and Witt, members of the committee,

I am providing testimony in support of SB 5542. As an advocate of Oregon Water Resources Department and the incredibly important work that the agency must perform on behalf of Oregonians, I want to lend my support to the budget request represented in SB 5542.

I have served as the Water Policy Steering Committee Co-Chair for Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) for the past 5 years and the IWRS Policy Advisory Group for the agency in 2016. During that period I have watched water resources in Oregon stretched, pulled and disrupted due to population growth, irrigation demand and climate change. I have also watched all parties interested in finding a better way to conserve, protect and allocate our water resources in Oregon asking for policies and budget to help facilitate that discovery.

Since 2013, the Oregon legislature has seen its way to invest in new appropriations to the agency for studies, planning and projects that help launch Oregon on a path to a competitive parallel with neighboring states regarding water resources. In order to maintain a continuity of delivery of those investments past and future, we must maintain a level of capacity that can meet the growing demand for Oregonians.

I am aware of the budget crisis we face here this session and realize we cannot fund everything that we want but I am also aware of the impact to the economy of Oregon and the quality of life threats that will be seen by our citizens if we don't prioritize our water resource management and protections in a more robust way. SB 5542 will help us accomplish that goal.

Commissioner Craig Pope

Polk County, Board Chair
AOC First Vice President
AOC Water Policy Co-Chair