



April 13, 2016

Senator Frederick, Co-Chair  
Representative Witt, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means-Natural Resources Subcommittee  
900 Court Street NE, Room H 178  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Deschutes River Conservancy testimony for SB 5542, Oregon Water Resources Department Budget**

Dear Co-Chairs and Committee Members,

The Deschutes River Conservancy (DRC) restores streamflow and improves water quality in the Deschutes Basin using a coordinated, collaborative and voluntary approach. Founded in 1996 as a consensus-based, multi-stakeholder organization, the DRC's Board of Directors includes diverse representation such as irrigated agriculture, hydro-power, tribal and environmental interests as well as federal, state and local government interests. The Oregon Water Resource Department (OWRD) is a key partner in DRC's streamflow restoration work in the Deschutes basin and DRC supports OWRD's budget request (SB 5542), including the following additional packages: 100 (fee schedule), 101 (groundwater studies), 102 (dam safety), 103 (well construction), 104 (time limited place based planning) and 105 (enhanced field management).

The DRC strongly supports funding for packages 101 and 105 as implementation of recommended actions in the 2012 Integrated Water Resources Strategy. Package 101, Understanding Our Water Resources, provides for investigative groundwater studies critical to the sustainable management of this limited and resource. Package 105, Enhanced Water Management in the Field, provides for increased OWRD field staff to help manage water, and collect and process data, services that are essential to the work of the DRC and the efficacy of water management in the state.

With climate change and population growth placing added pressure on the state's water resources, adequate OWRD funding is essential to providing the data and management resources the state needs to protect water supply and meet current and future water needs. The DRC requests the committee's full support of OWRD's request budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on OWRD's requested budget.

Sincerely,

Natasha Bellis  
Program Manager