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Oregon Water Resources Congress



May 18, 2017

To: Co-Chair Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair Representative Paul Holvey, and
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

RE: Water Investments in the 2017-2019 Budget, SB 5530

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Subcommittee:

We are writing to voice our strong support for the State's investment in water resources as outlined in the Governor's proposed 2017-2019 Budget. We are a diverse group of water stakeholders with a common goal: to advocate for common sense water policies that move Oregon's economy, communities, and environment toward a secure water future. We commend your continued hard work in crafting a balanced budget that meets the needs of all Oregonians and ask that you include investments in water supply management and development in your final budget package.

There are several key funding areas for the Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD) that we request be included in the 2017-2019 Budget:

- **Funding Feasibility Studies** – Additional grant funding for the Water Conservation, Reuse and Storage grant program, created by SB 1069 in 2008; *package #109, \$2 million lottery bonds*
- **Funding Water Supply Projects** – Additional grant and loan funds for the Water Supply Development Account, created by SB 839 in 2013; *package #110, \$30 million lottery bonds*

In light of climate change and recurring drought in the west, it is imperative that Oregon make a concerted investment in water resources now. Our neighbors in Washington, and more recently California, have invested extraordinary sums of public funding toward water supply planning and development to address water challenges that are facing all Western states. Investing in Oregon's water supply today through these important programs will ensure that future generations have adequate water supplies that support thriving communities, flourishing industries, and healthy ecosystems.

The Oregon Legislature has already taken a step in the right direction with the passage of both SB 1069 and SB 839; which fund water project feasibility studies and water supply development respectively. However, the costs associated with planning for and meeting our water needs greatly exceed available resources and both programs continue to have more demand than allocated funds. Additional funding for feasibility and implementation of water conservation, water reuse and water supply projects is critical to ensuring that our state continues to move forward in meeting its future water needs and associated economic, environmental, and community benefits.

As a whole, providing funding for the aforementioned components in the 2017-2019 Budget will not only help Oregon make progress in its diverse water supply needs, it will also strengthen our state's economy, empower local communities, and assist in restoring the environment we all share.

Thank you for considering Oregon's water supply needs in your ongoing efforts to provide a balanced budget for the 2017-2019 biennium.

Sincerely,

Association of Oregon Counties
The Freshwater Trust
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Oregon Business Council
Oregon Farm Bureau
Special Districts Association of Oregon

Association of Oregon Industries
The League of Oregon Cities
Oregon Business Association
Oregon Business Plan
Oregon Water Resources Congress