



Joint Ways and Means Capital Construction Subcommittee
Co-Chair Senator Fred Girod
Co-Chair Representative Paul Holvey
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

May 18, 2017

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

The Deschutes River Conservancy (DRC) is writing to support the Deschutes Basin Board of Control's (DBBC) request that the State of Oregon contribute a minimum of \$25 million through SB 5530 in the 2017-19 biennium to cost-share a collaborative water conservation program in the Deschutes Basin.

The mission of the Deschutes River Conservancy is to restore streamflow and water quality in the Deschutes Basin. The DRC has worked collaboratively over the last twenty years with the DBBC and other partners to restore streamflow using Oregon's Allocation of Conserved Water Program, alongside other tools like instream transfers and leases. In recent years, the DRC and partners have focused on developing a long-term water management agreement that meets water supply needs for rivers, agriculture and cities. The Upper Deschutes Basin Study, co-funded by the Bureau of Reclamation and the State of Oregon, is in its last year of analyzing the strategies necessary to do this. Restoring flows in the Upper Deschutes River is a central priority in this strategy and has increased in urgency since the Oregon spotted frog was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 2014.

The DRC advocates for a solution to restoring flows in the Upper Deschutes River that supports the agricultural community in Central Oregon. Piping leaky irrigation district infrastructure is a critical component of this broader strategy. The districts are well-poised to implement these projects at scale, and State funding is critical to support and accelerate this work. The DRC expects that the water saved through canal piping will be protected instream. The DRC is committed to working with the DBBC and other partners to make this a reality.

Thank you for your consideration. The opportunity to implement water supply solutions at scale is now. This investment in conservation, alongside market-based transactions, will help create water security for both Central Oregon farmers and the Deschutes River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tod Heisler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Tod Heisler, Executive Director
Deschutes River Conservancy