



HB 2786
Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon
Kimberley Priestley
Submitted to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
February 21, 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 2786

HB 2786 would limit the scope of the removal fill laws to only those wetlands that are included in the "Statewide Wetlands Inventory" (SWI). The SWI only includes a small subset of our state's wetlands, and, importantly, does not include Oregon's rivers and streams.

HB 2786's proposed narrowing of the Department of State's Lands jurisdiction over removal fill activities undermines key tenants of the removal fill law, which was enacted in 1967 to protect Oregon's wetlands and waterways for fisheries, natural habitats, water quality, flood storage and other public benefits. This would put Oregon's beloved rivers at risk and would compromise our state's important fisheries, which, among other things, brings substantial economic benefits to our state.

WaterWatch respectfully urges the Committee to reject HB 2786. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Contacts: Kimberley Priestley, WaterWatch of Oregon, 503-295-4039 x 3, kjp@waterwatch.org