



February 23, 2018

**To:** Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

**RE:** SB 5702: Support for the Rogue River Valley Irrigation District Bradshaw Drop Project

---

Dear Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction:

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is writing in support of Rogue River Valley Irrigation District's (RRVID) funding request for its Bradshaw Drop piping project which will provide pressurized water and the potential for on-farm irrigation efficiency projects in the Rogue Basin. We commend your continued hard work in crafting a balanced budget that meets the needs of all Oregonians and ask that you include an investment in a water conservation and efficiency project in your final budget package.

OWRC is a nonprofit association representing irrigation districts, water control districts, improvement districts, drainage districts, and other agricultural water suppliers. These local government entities operate complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower production, and deliver water to roughly 1/3 of all irrigated land in Oregon. OWRC has been promoting the protection and use of water rights and the wise stewardship of water resources on behalf of agricultural water suppliers for over 100 years. As such, we are highly supportive of long-term water supply planning and development efforts that include conservation, like the one being undertaken by RRVID.

The Bradshaw Drop piping project will pipe multiple miles of open irrigation canal with HDPE pipe, providing pressurized water to patrons of the RRVID. Additionally, piping this stretch of canal will allow RRVID to conserve water and leave some of that conserved water in Little Butte Creek, enhancing flows for several threatened and endangered species including: Coho; chinook; summer and winter steelhead, and rainbow and cutthroat trout. The pressurized water provided to patrons allows for further conservation benefits in that it makes on-farm efficiency improvements possible. On-farm efficiency, conversion from flood to sprinkler irrigation on over 700 acres of agricultural land, will eliminate tailwater and prevent associated pollutants from returning to surface streams in the Antelope Creek area of the Little Butte Creek Watershed, improving water quality and aquatic habitat.

RRVID's Bradshaw Drop piping project is an extremely worthwhile project that will provide economic, social, and environmental benefits to the local watershed and the users that rely upon it as well as the broader population of Oregon. It will keep valuable water in Little Butte Creek adding both water quality and quantity benefits to the Rogue River Basin. This will benefit the watershed habitat, specifically it will improve habitat for a number of threatened and

endangered species. This type of combined irrigation efficiency and conservation project is also an essential element to implementing Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) and Oregon's ongoing efforts to meet Oregon's long-term water needs, both instream and out of stream.

OWRC wholeheartedly recommends support and full funding of RRVID's Bradshaw Drop piping project. Specifically, the funding will go towards piping the Little Butte Creek diversion, which will conserve water that will be dedicated instream, directly impacting and improving conditions for native fish species and support the natural hydrograph. RRVID's project is worthy of state funding: it expands innovative methods and technologies to conserve water, improves water quality, benefits fish habitat, and ensures that the needs of irrigated agriculture are still met.

Sincerely,  
April Snell  
Executive Director