



OREGON
ASSOCIATION OF
NURSERIES™



March 1, 2018

Testimony in Support of OWRD Budget Request for Groundwater Studies
Joints Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey and members of the committee:

We are writing today to voice our **collective support for the Oregon Water Resource Department's (OWRD) budget request to perform groundwater studies. The Department's request for \$1,285,956** would provide them with the necessary capacity to collect the data to better understand Oregon's groundwater resources and enable the all stakeholders to better understand the state of our groundwater resources.

The Cattlemen's Association, Oregon Farm Bureau, WaterWatch, Oregon Association of Nurseries, Oregon Environmental Council, and The Nature Conservancy are united in recognizing the importance of Oregon's groundwater to our economy, public health, rural communities, and wildlife habitats, and OWRD's central role in collecting data on, understanding, and managing Oregon's shared groundwater resources.

With the recent news about Cape Town, South Africa counting down to "Day Zero" when they run out of drinking water, and the number of other major cities around the world that could face the same crisis in the coming years, **it's more critical than ever that we invest in the knowledge and resources needed to manage and sustain Oregon's groundwater resources into the future.**

With its current funding, OWRD does not have the necessary capacity to implement priority actions and programs to ensure that water is managed sustainably for people and nature. **Conducting groundwater investigations and improving water resource data collection, processing, and monitoring are priorities for the Department and for Oregon, as identified in the Integrated Water Resources Strategy** (Recommended Actions 1A, 1B, and 1C).

OWRD conducts basin studies to understand existing surface and groundwater resources and how they interact in each basin. The Department uses data such as groundwater levels and trends to make decisions across the state about water resource allocation. These data and studies help communities and water users understand the sustainability of existing uses of groundwater resources, as well as the potential for developing future uses.

We fully appreciate the magnitude of the challenges legislators face in producing a balanced budget. However, given the overwhelming need to sustainably manage water for people and nature, and the necessity of additional understanding of the groundwater resources to do this, **we urge you to approve OWRD's budget request to conduct critical groundwater studies.**

Sincerely,

Oregon Association of Nurseries

Oregon Cattlemen's Association

Oregon Environmental Council

Oregon Farm Bureau

The Nature Conservancy of Oregon

WaterWatch