

## Testimony to the Joint Subcommittee on Natural Resources on HB 5043

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

**Oregon Environmental Council strongly supports HB 5043. In addition, we support POPs #103, #108 and #109, which were not included in the Governor's recommended budget. We request that the committee recommend fully funding all the POPs below at the level requested in the agency requested budget.**

Oregonians rely on the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to manage the state's surface and groundwater in a manner that ensures sufficient quantity for current and future uses. In order to do so effectively and efficiently, the Department needs accurate data on surface and groundwater systems as well as water use. Sufficient staff to support local and regional planning and problem solving efforts means better decision-making on the part of individuals, businesses, decision-makers and agencies. Accurate assessments of current water infrastructure provides the starting point for prioritizing badly needed renovations and replacement of water delivery, water storage and water treatment systems. Finally, OWRD must play a pivotal role in helping to develop and implement a strong vision for Oregon's water future.

POP #101 – Continue Place-Based Planning Program: Supports ongoing place-based planning efforts to move Oregon forward on addressing local and regional water-related problems at the appropriate scale. Evaluating the program and identifying areas for improvement will ensure that the processes underway are more successful and that future efforts have tools to support their efforts.  
\$980,000 Governor's Requested Budget

POP #102 – Groundwater Data, Management and Protection: OWRD needs to understand and manage groundwater resources sustainably to protect existing users, while providing timely groundwater permitting reviews for potential new uses and protecting the groundwater resource to prevent loss of artesian pressure, contamination, and waste. Essential to a complete assessment of Oregon's water infrastructure needs. \$2.8M Governor's Requested Budget / \$3.32M Agency Requested Budget

POP #103 – Resolving Complex Water Issues: The State is seeing an increased need to help communities resolve complex water management issues. To resolve these issues, the Department needs to coordinate data requests from individuals working to identify water management solutions; ensure all interested parties, elected officials and the public are continuously updated on meetings and efforts; and respond to requests to clarify statutes, rules, policies and practices. Capacity

and data essential to a complete assessment of Oregon's water infrastructure needs. \$1,363,009 Agency Requested Budget

POP #104 – Dam Safety: Understanding the safety and structural integrity of Oregon's 969 non-federal dams is essential to protect the safety of growing downstream communities as dams age and the potential for flooding and earthquakes increases. This will fund assessments of dams for earthquake, flood and structural safety issues, and update dam hazard ratings to more accurately represent their potential community impact based on current populations. Essential to complete assessment of Oregon's water infrastructure needs. \$600,000 Governor's Requested Budget / \$1.28M Agency Requested Budget

POP #106 – Water Management in the Field: Strengthens field presence and addresses field workload challenges stemming from increasing number of water rights, wells, population, homes, and changing water management needs. \$754,000 Governor's Requested Budget / \$1.5M Agency Requested Budget

POP #107 – Investing in Projects to Meet Water Needs: To adequately meet Oregon's instream and out-of-stream water demands now and into the future, Oregon needs to invest in efforts to evaluate and implement projects. That means looking more closely at innovative water conservation and reuse projects, environmentally sound storage projects, and other water projects. \$15,000,000 in Lottery Revenue Bond proceeds plus \$278,000 to WRD Governor's Requested Budget

POP #108 – Improving Water Use Measurement and Reporting: Supports an increase in water use measurement and water use reporting to better understand current demands on water resources, particularly in areas where this information is needed for water distribution and management, protecting existing users, preventing illegal use, and as inputs into groundwater basin studies and surface water availability programs. \$1,428,313 Agency Requested Budget

POP #109 – Increase Access to Data for Decision Making: This would strengthen the department's ability to analyze and present meaningful water resources data to the public, local governments and water resources planning initiatives to inform smart development and management strategies to plan responsibly for the future. Essential to a complete assessment of Oregon's water infrastructure needs. \$1,579,508 Agency Requested Budget

**Oregon Environmental Council urges you to fund the POPs included in HB 5043 and POPs #103, #108, and #109 at the full level requested in the agency's recommended budget.**