



## **HB 2944**

### **Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon By Kimberley Priestley**

**Submitted to the House Committee Energy and Environment  
March 14, 2019**

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.

#### **HB 2944, Amendments Needed**

HB 2944 would establish a Task Force on Oregon's Domestic Water Supply. As we understand it, the impetus behind this Task Force was a desire to explore preventative measures to address toxic algae blooms that affect domestic water supplies. If this is in fact the driver, we would recommend that the bill be amended in two ways so as to best address this goal:

- (1) Section 1(2)(a): Replace "the Water Resources Department" with "the Department of Environmental Quality".
- (2) Section 1(3)(a): Delete "and other impacts of climate change" from line 15 so that the directive to the Task Force to create strategies is limited to the narrow goal of: Controlling and preventing toxic algae blooms on Oregon's domestic water use water supply.

Without these changes the bill's scope appears to be much broader than addressing the problem of toxic algae blooms and could have implications on things such as streamflows, fish and wildlife, water supply, regionalization and any number of other issues where Oregon's domestic water supplies might intersect with "impacts of climate change".

That said, if in fact the proponents of this bill want to address goals that are broader than toxic algae blooms, then the bill should be amended to ensure that the relevant group of interests and agencies are included on the Task Force as follows(1) mandate a broader and balanced group of interests be included in the Task Force, including, but not limited to, conservation groups; and (2) mandate that OWRD, DEQ, and ODFW are included on the Task Force.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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