



May 16, 2019

To: Chair Michael Dembrow, Vice-Chair Alan Olsen and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2085A with -A5 Amendments

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Alan Olsen, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is testifying in support of HB 2085A, the proposed -A5 amendments, and the underlying dam safety program administered by the Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD).

OWRC is a nonprofit association representing irrigation districts, water control districts, improvement districts, drainage districts and other government entities delivering agricultural water supplies. The water stewards we represent operate complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower facilities, 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.

OWRC has participated in several stakeholder meetings convened by WRD and been kept well-apprised of the development and subsequent amendments to this technical bill. Many of the dams and reservoirs operated by districts are owned in whole or part by the federal government (i.e. the U.S Bureau of Reclamation) and are regulated under applicable federal dam safety programs. However, some OWRC members are under the WRD's jurisdiction and are covered by existing dam safety statutes and the provisions of HB 2085A.

OWRC is supportive of WRD's authority to inspect applicable dams and to be able to take timely action when there is a hazardous situation. The categories for establishing risk as well as standards for hazardous ratings are well thought out and continue under this bill. HB 2085A, with the A5 amendments, will update WRD's dam safety statutes so that they can continue to effectively inspect and regulate dams in Oregon. Technical modernization of these statutes, which have been relatively unchanged for over 80 years, is needed and supported by OWRC.

In conclusion, OWRC supports the state's dam safety program and WRD's modest statutory updates to as embodied in HB 2085A and the -A5 amendments. We respectfully request the committee pass HB 2085. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
April Snell
Executive Director