



## Testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 2857 and HB 3274

To: House Committee on Energy and Environment  
From: Central Oregon LandWatch  
Date: March 26, 2019

---

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee:

On behalf of Central Oregon LandWatch, we urge a NO vote on both HB 2857 and HB 3274, each of which seeks to establish quotas for energy generation from small-scale renewable facilities (and anticipates the use of in-conduit hydroelectric projects to do so).

Central Oregon LandWatch has a mission of achieving a responsible, balanced approach to planning for and conserving Oregon's land and water resources east of the Cascades, while recognizing the needs of future generations. To those ends, promoting the use of renewable energy sources is a laudable goal... however, without the appropriate regulations and sideboards, this particular effort risks irreversible ecological damage as an ancillary effect.

While each piece of legislation goes out of its way to declare that small-scale in-conduit hydroelectric projects "can" have certain beneficial effects, the carefully qualified language is functionally meaningless. In much the same way that a sledgehammer "can" be used as a flyswatter, in-conduit hydro "can" result in some benefits, but only if managed and regulated very carefully in order to avoid the much-more-likely damage to the surrounding environment. Sadly (and ominously!), this legislation lacks standards around water conservation, efficiency standards, fish passage, minimum flows, and other considerations that would add any shred of meaning to the aspirations in the Legislative findings.

In fact, left to the current regulatory structure, these measures will likely fuel a desire for greater revenues from in-conduit hydroelectric, resulting in greater diversions from rivers and disincentives to conservation work. These diversions would damage salmonid habitat, water flows, and all of the ecological and commercial activities connected therewith.

As noted above, promoting the use of renewable energy generation is a worthy goal. But we have an opportunity here not only to encourage such projects, but to ensure that they are implemented prudently.

In consideration of the vital role our waterways play to our state, please give these measures the scrutiny that ought to have been applied to this issue in 2007 and 2013, and vote NO on HB 2857 and HB 3274.