



February 5, 2020

Representative Helm, Chair
House Committee on Water

Re: Trout Unlimited Comments on HB 4069

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill (HB) 4069. My name is Chandra Ferrari and I represent Trout Unlimited (TU), a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of cold-water fishes, such as trout and salmon, and their habitats. TU has more than 300,000 members and supporters nationwide including over 3,000 in Oregon. TU supports HB 4069 and the -1 amendment both which would allow the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to require reporting of water use information in situations where measurement of water use is already required. HB 4069 is a common-sense bill that will help OWRD access available water use information in an efficient manner.

Sustainable water management requires accurate data on water diversion and use. An increased understanding of water use through accurate water measurement and reporting will result in many benefits to a diverse range of stakeholders including improved water rights administration, improved understanding of available water supplies, better means to protect senior water rights and ability to efficiently manage and use water during times of drought. Having this understanding is also critical for ensuring the adequate protection of fishery resources. Watersheds with little or inaccurate information on water use and availability are susceptible to over-allocation, which often leads to inadequate instream flows for fish.

While OWRD has authority to require measurement of most water rights and is making some progress toward doing so, it does not have the authority to require reporting of the measured data in many cases. This bill would ensure that OWRD has clear authority to require reporting of measured data in situations where it already has the authority to require water measurement. Water measurement data is inherently more useful if it can be easily accessed and utilized by OWRD.

While not directly addressed by this bill, TU also supports a pathway to elevate substantive discussions regarding how best to achieve timely broad-scale water measurement and reporting in the state. TU has previously engaged in discussions on this topic with a diverse range of stakeholders and we understand that there are several issues regarding broad-scale measurement and reporting that would benefit from focused dialogue. TU supports constructive dialogue on this topic and is willing to engage with all stakeholders interested in developing timely solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 4069.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chandra Ferrari".

Chandra Ferrari
Senior Policy Advisor
cferrari@tu.org