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March 16, 2021

House Committee On Water
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Testimony: HB 3103

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Owens and Reardon, and Members of the Committee,

Central Oregon LandWatch (“LandWatch”) is a conservation organization which for more than 35 years has protected Central Oregon’s beautiful forests and high desert, rivers and springs, fish and wildlife, and our vibrant communities. We work to conserve the region’s ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and working rural lands balanced with a responsible, sustainable approach to planning and fostering thriving communities.

LandWatch strongly supports HB 3103. Bill authorizes holder of water right certificate that allows storage of water to change use of water, subject to certain requirements.

HB 3103 provides necessary flexibility to change the character of use of stored water. Water stored in reservoirs originally intended for an irrigation use may be needed for a different purpose today. Water may need to be released from a reservoir for flood control or to support fish and wildlife habitat needs. In the Deschutes River Basin, reservoir releases are needed to restore Oregon Spotted Frog habitat, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

LandWatch thanks the committee for its consideration of this important bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Tod Heisler
Director, Rivers Program
Central Oregon LandWatch

