



TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR

April 11, 2024

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Janet Neuman
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David Filippi
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Josh Newton
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RE: Water Policy Priorities for Oregon

Dear Adell, David, Janet, and Josh:

Thank you for your letter concerning the development of water policy priorities to advance the State's water security and resiliency goals. I appreciate your willingness to share your time and expertise on an issue of vital importance and impact to all Oregonians.

I found our conversation helpful in providing context and important perspective on how Oregon might take a more proactive pathway to address issue areas of strategic importance to improve management of Oregon's water resources. Already, we are taking initial steps to address some of the opportunities you have raised. While there will be more to come, the following are underway:

- This week, I am directing the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to pause the ongoing process to revise the State's Integrated Water Resources Strategy to ensure that, when adopted, the strategy will be structured to articulate more definitive outcomes that will best serve the water needs and interests of all Oregonians. Your call out of the imperative for "up-front objectives" to set the stage for more coordination resonates with me, and the process for revising this strategy document is a perfect opportunity and venue for discussing meaningful outcomes that multiple agencies and stakeholders can join together to work toward.
- We have adjusted the recruitment process for the new OWRD director to allow the finalists for the position the opportunity to read your letter, have a conversation with all of you, and then discuss your call for leadership directly with me in their final interview. I am looking for strong vision and leadership from the next director, and your letter will certainly contribute to that process.
- The convergence of new and incoming directors at the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, and OWRD offers a tremendous opportunity to truly integrate our approach to tackling water management and other natural resource challenges facing our state. My staff will be working closely with these new directors and the rest of the

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Natural Resources cabinet to establish clear budget and policy priorities aimed at helping Oregon's natural and working landscapes be more resilient in the face of accelerating impacts from a changing climate. More effective water management will be central to that discussion.

With all this in mind, I have also added capacity to my natural resource policy staff in order to dedicate additional attention to water issues. In the near term, that will be most visible in conversations my office will be having with a variety of constituencies to elicit feedback on the issues raised in your letter and suggestions for how we can build a coalition of interests willing to work together to better position our state to manage our water resources more effectively, efficiently, and equitably into the future.

You brought a lot of expertise and time to the table with your January 15, 2024, letter. I thank you for that. I look forward to talking and working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina Kotek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tina" and last name "Kotek" clearly distinguishable.

Governor Tina Kotek