

2025 WATER MANAGEMENT MODERNIZATION

A PREVIEW OF POLICIES
AND INVESTMENTS

UPDATED DECEMBER 2024

CALL TO ACTION

“Oregon water management is at a [critical] tipping point necessitating decisive action and adaptation”

- An appeal to modernize Oregon's water laws from prominent water law experts (2024)

WHY NOW?

Large Demand for Limited Supply: Surface and groundwater are fully or over-appropriated across much of Oregon, requiring adaptation.

Serious Threats to Health and Safety: Communities across Oregon are dealing with aging and failing water infrastructure.

Complex and Persistent Challenges: Long-standing water resource challenges require sustained attention, leadership, and investment.

Shifting from Reactive to Proactive: A transition is needed from crisis-driven responses to proactive approaches that reduce long-term costs.

GENERATING SOLUTIONS

Build on Past Success and Lessons: Review policies and investments from the past to inform decisions and improve outcomes for the future.

Respond to Urgent Issues: Stay alert to urgent issues affecting the state and communities, including ongoing media coverage.

Address Long-Standing Needs: Review plans, studies, and reports to identify issues and needs that have previously been identified.

Engage and Partner: Engage with colleagues, agencies, tribes, advocates, subject matter experts, and communities.

PRINCIPLES

Balanced benefits
for families,
farms, and fish

Break the
cycle of
emergency

Prepare for
long-term
water scarcity

Coordinate
and invest
strategically

Leverage
federal
funding

PRIORITY AREAS

- Safe and Reliable Drinking Water
- Better Sharing of a Scarce Resource
- Informed Water Management
- Efficient and Equitable Processes
- Strategic Water Investments

SAFE AND RELIABLE DRINKING WATER

Groundwater Quality Protection: Modernizing the Groundwater Quality Act for more proactive management to address water quality.

Drinking Water Infrastructure: Supporting critical drinking water projects, often identified as a top priority, including to meet housing production goals.

Small Community Water Systems: Continuing to assess and address vulnerabilities of small community water systems.

Emergency Assistance: Responding to water crises, domestic well and septic system issues, and exploring safety net for vulnerable ratepayers.

BETTER SHARING OF A SCARCE RESOURCE

Water Reuse: Overcoming barriers to water reuse projects, including establishing an interagency water reuse program team.

Aquifer Recharge: Continuing to address barriers, develop technical assistance, and advance aquifer recharge and storage in Oregon.

Water Banking: Exploring statewide and region-specific authority to address water supply shortfalls with flexibility and accountability.

Conservation and Efficiency: Incentivizing water conservation and efficient use across multiple sectors.

INFORMED WATER MANAGEMENT

Groundwater Sustainability Scorecard: Using data to prioritize management actions and help communities achieve sustainability.

Integrated Water Data Portal: Advancing development of a water data portal that will increase accessibility and usability of water data.

Data Gathering: Strengthening OWRD authority to obtain water use data and investing in monitoring of water supply, quality, and habitat.

Updated Basin Assessments: Ensuring technical basis necessary to understand and meet instream and out-of-stream water needs.

EFFICIENT AND EQUITABLE PROCESSES

Contested Case Backlog: Refining OWRD and Office of Administrative Hearings contested case processes to address and prevent backlogs.

General Process Improvements: Considering statutory and administrative changes that improve efficiency and equity of OWRD processes.

Transfer Processes: Exploring opportunities to increase timeliness and flexibility of transfers while accounting for resource impacts.

Reliability: Protecting existing water users by proactively limiting additional approvals in fully appropriated and over-appropriated areas.

STRATEGIC WATER INVESTMENTS

Improvements to Existing Programs: Identifying and implementing improvements to OWRD's existing funding programs.

Water Equity Investments: Continuing investments to support water equity work within communities across Oregon.

Infrastructure Funding Strategy: Advancing a more cohesive, strategic approach to statewide water infrastructure investments.

Federal Funding Readiness: Expanding capacity to track, coordinate, and offer technical assistance on federal funding opportunities.

OTHER THINGS ON OUR RADAR

Aquatic Invasive Species

Multistate working group identifying actions to address quagga mussels.

Basin-Specific Strategies and Solutions

Elevating and funding strategies and actions identified through collaborative processes.

Additional Discussions

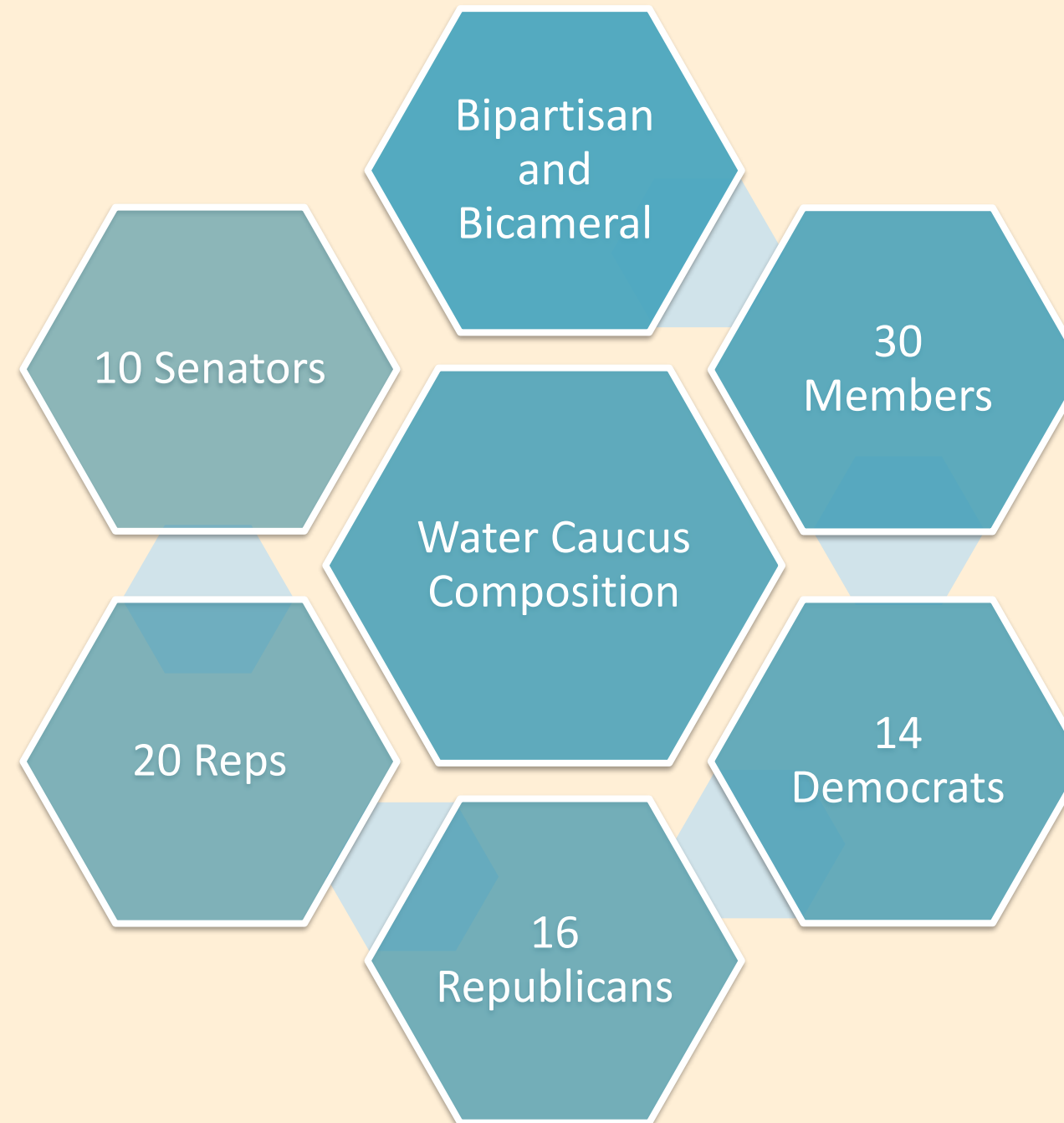




WATER CAUCUS

Established in 2023

Tackling complex water challenges requires focused leadership, innovation, and long-term commitment to learning and working together.



A watershed moment

We all need water,
don't sit this one out.
Come ready to collaborate!