



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

February 23, 2023

To: [Chair Helm](#), [Vice Chairs Hartman](#) and [Owens](#) and Members of the [House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water](#)

Re: [HB 3163](#) – **Place-Based Water Planning Fund – SUPPORT**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon has studied water quality and quantity since the 1960s. We believe "*that water is a resource that should be managed for the benefit of the public and as sustainable habitat for all life forms.*" Most recently, we participated in the [HB 5006 \(2021\) Work Group](#) where many people with a wide variety of water interests discussed the many issues around Oregon's water. With that background, **we are pleased to support HB 3163.**

The League supported the creation of the pilot Place-Based Planning Program and has followed the four planning groups as they struggled with funding, with finding facilitation services, with accessing the data needed from a variety of local, state and federal agencies in order to understand their "place" related to water. They worked to keep members engaged and informed as the process moved forward. **And it took too long—in part due to lack of both funding and data.**

During the HB 5006 Work Group meetings, we focused on improving the guidance around these planning efforts and the public engagement needed to assure all voices are heard. We see the creation of this Fund as a requirement for continuing the Place-Based Planning efforts in Oregon.

**The Governor has just declared a drought in two counties in Oregon—and it's just February!** We have an on-going drought throughout Oregon. Committee members may want to check the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), a map that is updated every Thursday. Here is the Oregon-only [link](#). That big red splotch indicates extreme drought; the brown is exceptional drought and, you will note, much of Oregon is in some level of drought.

We can no longer ignore the truth that we have limited surface water to share and have over appropriated groundwater in many parts of the state. We cannot ignore the water quality crisis in the Umatilla where our friends and neighbors are being sickened by polluted groundwater. We can celebrate that our Warm Springs tribal members are finally going to get safe drinking water and a functioning sewer system—systems that have taken too long to secure. The fact is that these situations are happening in many parts of Oregon. Our small rural towns have a need for upgrading, repairing or replacing water systems. Our agriculture community finds their permitted water rights cannot be fully accessed due to drought. Our new businesses, such as the semiconductor industries the legislature is considering helping to site, need adequate clean water for their manufacturing systems. Data centers, such as those in The Dalles, Prineville and Boardman, are seeking water for cooling their equipment. And our iconic salmon need sufficient clean cool water flowing in our streams to survive.

We know that there are many places in Oregon that need to find solutions to both water quantity and quality—for humans and for our aquatic creatures—for agriculture and other industrial uses—for the environment and our economy. Place-based Planning sets a table for those conversations. HB 3163 provides funding for those conversations.

**We encourage you to support HB 3163 and ask your fellow legislators to appropriate money for this work.**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Rebecca Gladstone  
LWVOR President



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Natural Resources Coordinator