



March 2, 2023

Representative Ken Helm, Chair
Representative Annessa Hartman, Vice-Chair
Representative Mark Owens, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Re: Deschutes River Conservancy Supports HB 3163

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Hartman and Owens, and Member of the Committee,

The Deschutes River Conservancy (DRC) supports HB 3163 to continue and enhance state investment in Place-Based Planning. The DRC restores streamflow and improves water quality in the Deschutes Basin using a collaborative and voluntary approach. As the DRC's Executive Director, I served on the 5006 working group last year representing a regional perspective, and I support the recommendations the group generated to inform future place-based planning.

The DRC and its many partners in the Deschutes Basin have essentially been doing place-based planning for the last twenty years- before the state had a place-based planning pilot program. We have demonstrated that this approach can be incredibly effective. As a basin we have restored significant flows to our rivers while meeting needs for agriculture and growing communities. Importantly, we have continued to work together as a community instead of falling into conflict. We believe this foundation sets us up to deal more effectively with the future water challenges facing us. We are continuing this work now as the Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative, a group with over 40 diverse members, and we are developing an integrated basin water management plan consistent with the state's framework for place-based planning.

Given the water challenges ahead of us, continued state investment in place-based planning is a critical piece of the water management puzzle and I would urge this committee to support this ongoing work. At the highest level, the best water management takes place within a strong state framework AND employs basin planning to accommodate the specific hydrologic and social contexts of each unique place, as well as the solution sets most effective in those places.

Within this, I emphasize specific points:

- The state agencies need sufficient capacity to engage in basin planning efforts and to provide high quality data for these efforts. This was the recommendation from the 5006 working group that received the most support.
- Secondly, place-based planning requires significant work and time, all of which eventually pay dividends when it results in durable solutions and an enduring culture of collaborative water management. When a community completes a plan, if it balances instream and out of stream needs and is consistent with the state's Integrated Water Resources Strategy, the state should do everything it can to support plan implementation. Implementing solutions is the end-game goal we are all working towards.

In closing, we support the spirit of the recommendations of the 5006 working group and I am happy to help work on amendments that I understand are happening to ensure that the state continues to invest in place-based planning.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Warmly,



Kate Fitzpatrick
Executive Director