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March 7, 2023

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE Salem Oregon 97301

Re: HB 3163 – Support

Chair Helm, Vice Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Owens, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Oriana Magnera and I am the Energy Climate and Transportation Manager at Verde. I am grateful today to testify in support of HB 3163. I participated in the Regional Planning work mentioned at the start of this hearing.

In Verde's work we often talk about representation, self-determination, and procedural justice. Procedural justice means processes that are transparent, fair, and inclusive in developing and implementing any program, plan, or policy. These are strategies to increase civic engagement from communities who are often left out of decision-making spaces, like rural communities and BIPOC communities. Black box processes that take in community input but don't show transparently how it was used are a barrier to procedural justice and are pervasive throughout state agency work. Place-based planning is the opposite.

While Verde has not actively engaged in any place-based planning process, we view this work as procedural justice, and an opportunity for communities to have self-determination around how local resources are managed, while also building relationships and including the voices of people who steward and advocate for water as a public resource. We support HB 3163 because without it, the important, collaborative work will not be able to continue.

While it might not use the exact words of the Regional Water Planning workgroup report, Verde believes HB 3163 is reflective of the intent of the process. Verde is interested in working with anyone who feels that it is not to create alignment that is also reflective of community voices that were not engaged in that work.

One of the tensions that came up frequently in the regional planning conversation was that between local voices fighting for self-determination and those state-level stewards who sometimes feel out of step with that local work. Communities deserve a process that has teeth and is not a pilot program to nowhere. Statewide planning and IWRS

conversations should be responsive to community voices who have been underrepresented or excluded from those places in the past. To quote the Secretary of State report on water, “Many communities are not fully integrated into water decisions and often not even aware there is a problem.” Verde also believes that water is a complicated issue because it is a public resource that flows across and provides benefits to many communities, and that the communities who are left out are not always within a particular basin.

These are thorny issues that will at its core not resolve in the conversations around HB 3163, but at its best, place-based planning can build bridges and understanding across the gaps in trust and perspective. I hope that an amendment to HB 3163 can do the same.

Finally, Verde has two recommendations for amendments to the HB 3163 base bill:

- Retain and expand the language that supports engagement with environmental justice communities. Language in the bill should also be strengthened around consultation and collaboration with Tribal governments and communities who have sustained and protected all water in Oregon since time immemorial.
- Eliminate the requirement for 25% match to access grant funds. This is both something that is better left to rulemaking, and also a substantial barrier to smaller rural communities where much of the place-based planning has and should occur.

In closing, members of this committee who know me know I love a big collaborative process and that I believe all communities should be able to share in that kind of fun. Thank you for your time and I’m happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,

Oriana Magnera
Energy, Climate, and Transportation Manager, Verde