



**Oregon**  
**Winegrowers**  
ASSOCIATION EST 1981

March 23, 2023

TO: Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

FROM: Oregon Winegrowers Association

RE: Support for SB 956 with -2 amendment

Dear Chair Manning, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee

The Oregon Winegrowers Association (OWA) represents hundreds of winery and grape growing members from every winegrowing region in Oregon, and our members represent two-thirds of Oregon's overall wine production. For more than 40 years, OWA has been the leading advocate for Oregon wineries and growers. Today, we write as efficient irrigators committed to supporting water policy initiatives that promote collaborative planning, based on hydrological boundaries.

Wine grapes are an important value-added agricultural crop directly and indirectly contributing billions of dollars to the Oregon economy each year. Due to climate change, growing wine grapes in many parts of the state increasingly requires irrigating to establish new vines and sustain wine grape cultivation. Taking actions to manage resources for long-term reliable water supply is critical to not only the viability of vineyard farming in Oregon, but for meeting the needs of all water users who depend on healthy watersheds.

SB 956, the companion bill that is making its way through the Washington Legislature ([HB 1322](#)), and the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan collectively serve as an excellent example of varying parties with distinct political boundaries collaborating to articulate a common purpose, set of actions, and financial commitments to meet the needs of the many. We understand this collaborative work to be an important first step in planning a secure water future for the Walla Walla basin, meeting in-stream and out-of-stream needs, as well as groundwater supply.

This kind of holistic resource management planning is critical to maintaining water resources, keeping our agricultural industries and jobs growing in Eastern Oregon and throughout the state. We commend the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan Advisory Committee including farmer members, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and policymakers and regulators in WA and OR for their innovative work and we urge this committee's support of SB 956 with the -2 amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

Jana McKamey  
Executive Director  
Oregon Winegrowers Association