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April 3, 2023

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

Re: HB 3343 – Support

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3343. For the record, my name is Cheyenne Holliday, and I am the water justice coordinator at Verde. We are a community-based organization that serves communities by building environmental wealth. We work with communities across the state to lift up their personal experiences and stories to bring their voices to water policy and decision making processes.

We have worked with the Oregon Water Futures Collaborative to engage with hundreds community members across the state to produce the Oregon Water Futures Report and Policy Action Framework. We have engaged with over 200 Oregon residents and continue to hear from community members about questions and concerns around the quality of their water and reliability of their groundwater. These concerns are shared across the state but are especially of concern in Umatilla and Malheur Counties, who are both designated as groundwater management areas.

Groundwater is a precious resource and as Oregon experiences a warming climate and population increase, demand on the resource will grow. It is important to ensure that current systems for managing groundwater and the Oregon Groundwater Quality Protection Act of 1989 are working effectively. Currently, no studies to review groundwater management in Oregon have been conducted. HB 3343 will direct The Department of Environmental Quality, partnering agencies, state, local, and private organizations, through a taskforce to review the current approach to managing groundwater, identify issues, and recommend legislation. It is important to review and revise the current approaches to managing groundwater thus ensuring that they

are adequate, equitable, and effective. HB 3343's purpose is not to take away or evaluate water rights, but to analyze the quality of groundwater and ensure Oregon's approach to managing it is effective and adequate.

We hope that the taskforce will include representatives of communities who are most impacted by groundwater challenges. We also believe that the department should invite each of the federally recognized tribes to participate in the taskforce.

Verde urges the committee to support HB 3343, and by doing so supporting the effectiveness of groundwater management approaches in Oregon.

Thank you for your time.

Cheyenne Holliday
Water Justice Coordinator, Verde