



April 12, 2023

Senate Committee on Natural Resources
Chair Jeff Golden,
Vice-Chair Fred Girod,
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Joint Testimony in Support of HB 3164

We are writing to voice our collective support of House Bill 3164 and the continuance of Oregon’s split-season instream leasing program. Our respective associations represent a variety of water user interests who support common-sense approaches to meet the shared water supply needs of our economy, communities, and environment.

Split-season leasing is a voluntary mechanism that allows water right holders to use their water right for irrigation or other existing uses for part of the water year, and then lease it instream late in the summer when it matters most to fish. This important water management and conservation tool has been in statute as a pilot program since 1987.

Split-season leasing provides an incentivized pathway for water users to help enhance instream flows at crucial times while preserving the ability of the water right holder to continue to irrigate and grow agricultural products during other parts of the irrigation season. Unique programs like this one are the kinds of tools Oregon needs to meet our equally important instream and out-of-stream needs now and into the future.

The continuance of the split-season leasing program will help support voluntary and collaborative restoration projects while also ensuring the continued production of food, fiber and other agricultural products.

Please support HB 3164 and retain split-season leasing as an important tool in Oregon’s water management toolbox.

Sincerely,
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Oregon Farm Bureau
Oregon Water Resources Congress
League of Oregon Cities
Association of Oregon Counties

Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Northeast Oregon Water Association
Special Districts Association of Oregon