



February 13, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs  
Re: Support for SB 1567: Implementing the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan

Dear Chair Manning Jr. and members of the Committee,

American Farmland Trust strongly supports SB 1567. Our mission is to save the land that sustains us by protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. Critical to achieving this mission, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, is ensuring a supply of water that meets the needs of all users for generations to come. The development of new water sources is critical. The Walla Walla basin, which has over 85,000 irrigated acres in an over-appropriated watershed, faces a unique challenge of requiring management across state lines. This demands strong collaboration and co-management between Oregon, Washington, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan will support this Tri-Sovereign approach..

Last session, the Washington Legislature unanimously passed 2SHB 1332 to authorize the Walla Walla Water 2050 initiative. This legislation directs the Washington State Department of Ecology to work with Oregon to develop a bistate regulatory framework for equitable allocation and management of developed water sources, in consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. In order to initiate this work, the Oregon Legislature needs to take a similar action and authorize the Oregon Water Resources Department to engage in these efforts.

With declining snowpack throughout the Pacific Northwest and the increasing threat of drought, this work only becomes more urgent as time goes by. We are encouraged by the work of local communities, agricultural producers, Tribes, holders of water rights, and other interests in seeking solutions that meet the needs across the board. Thank you for bringing SB 1567 forward to implement the Walla Walla Water 2050. Without this legislation, the critical work to address the growing challenges of water supply in the Walla Walla basin will struggle to move forward.

Sincerely,

Dani Madrone  
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