

DATE: February 19, 2025

TO: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Co-Chair Helm	Representative Bobby Levy
Co-Chair Owens	Representative Marsh
Vice-Chair Finger McDonald	Representative McLain
Representative Boice	Representative Scharf
Representative Hartman	



FROM: Oregon Water Partnership

RE: **HB 3419 -3: Support for Better Water Use Measurement and Reporting**



Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and Members of the Committee,

Oregon Water Partnership (OWP) supports clarification of statutory authority for water use measurement and reporting to enable Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to accomplish its mission.



OWP is a diverse partnership of statewide conservation groups with a common goal: to advocate for balanced water policies that ensure cold clean water to sustain healthy communities, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Our priorities for the 2025 legislative session are to build resilience for Oregon’s water future, bring water data into the 21st century, support smart water management, and protect and restore our waters. Core members of OWP served on the Water Data Work Group and delivered our recommendations to a version of this Committee in 2021.



OWP strongly supports the intent and direction of HB 3419 -3, which seeks to ensure our water laws governing water use measurement and reporting are consistent and effective. We also encourage amendments to clarify that OWRD has the flexibility it needs to shape water use measurement and reporting requirements to solve water problems at all relevant scales.



The Staff Measure Summary for HB 3419 -3 reminds us that “Oregon Water Resources Department is a state agency whose mission is to directly address Oregon’s water supply needs and to restore and protect streamflows and watersheds in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of Oregon’s ecosystems, economy, and quality of life.” This is a massive mandate, especially since all water within the state from all sources of water supply belongs to the public. Yet **Oregon lacks foundational data needed to make smart water-related decisions related to the use of our water supply.**



According to OWRD’s 2022 Legislative Report on Water Use Measurement and Reporting, “Water use measurement data can help the Department protect existing water right holders, facilitate planning for future water supplies, maximize the beneficial uses for both instream and out-of-stream uses, and minimize time-consuming and costly conflicts over water use.” At the same time, only about 17% of water rights are required to measure and report water use.



We know we can’t manage what we don’t measure, but the state’s existing authorities around measurement and reporting of water use are poorly matched to the scale of our growing water challenges. That’s why Oregon Water Partnership supports statutory enhancements that give the state the tools and information it needs to proactively steward the public’s waters for instream and out-of-stream uses in the face of worsening drought, increasing water demand, and changing climate. With amendments to clarify OWRD’s discretion to tailor water use measurement and reporting to fit water management needs, this bill is a big step forward.

Oregon Water Partnership appreciates the sponsors' attention to this critically important issue and looks forward to continued progress during the 2025 legislative session.

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