

Submitter: Eva Kirk
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB427

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

I support Senate Bill 427 to safeguard streamflows in water right transfers.

I grew up along the Nehalem river in Clatsop county with my dad who taught me about native plants and wildlife. I learned to respect the river as a life-giving resource rather than something to be extracted for profit. This is important to me and I believe our rivers deserve protection.

Oregon is known for being water rich state with abundant flora and fauna, but that could change if water rights aren't regulated to protect them.

The water in our streams is our state's lifeblood. It grows our salmon and our food, and it fuels our families. It ties us to our neighbors upstream and downstream. It belongs to all of us.

Yet for far too long, an outdated loophole has allowed the Oregon Water Resources Department to approve applications for water right transfers without adequate consideration of whether the change will harm streamflows. Lower water levels in a stream can hurt fish, impair water quality, and decrease scenic and recreation values.

Senate Bill 427 safeguards our streams—and the fish, water quality, and scenic values they support—by ensuring voluntary water right changes won't further diminish streamflows. This narrow fix closes a dangerous loophole and brings modern environmental values into Oregon's outdated water right transfer review process.

I urge your support of SB 427 and the life-sustaining streamflows it will safeguard.

Sincerely,
Eva Kirk