

Submitter: Darlene Chirman
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. With climate change we are experiencing hotter, drier summers with reduced summer streamflows in Oregon. Fish and other critters depend on our rivers and streams, and many municipal water systems depend on these same rivers and streams. With many listed runs of salmon and steelhead in Oregon, we must protect streamflows. Maintaining summer flows also provides for moister riparian zones, which can serve as natural firebreaks in the event of wildfire. These moist riparian zones thus provide wildlife refugia during wildfires.

The Oregon Water Resources Department is charged with approving applications for water right transfers. However, outmoded regulations mean that inadequate evaluation of impact of changed usage in water right transfers take place. Senate Bill 427 will safeguard our streams—protecting water quality, water quantity, fish habitat, recreational and scenic values—by ensuring that water right transfers don't degrade streamflow.

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