

Submitter: Dustin Kunkel  
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 have lived in Oregon for over 25 years, and my father and grandfather before me. I am an outdoorsman, and spend much of my time in the beauty of Oregon's watersheds. Streams are the living veins of our state. Streams should have as much a right to exist as any human or corporation, and have the same due process before being used for some other purpose. Oregon's greatest resource is its natural state! We need to protect it now more than ever. I support Senate Bill 427 to safeguard streamflows in water right transfers.

For far too long, an outdated loophole in Oregon law has allowed the Oregon Water Resources Department to approve applications for water right transfers without adequate consideration of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 This narrow fix closes a dangerous loophole and brings modern environmental values into Oregon's outdated water right transfer review process.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,  
Dustin "Dust" Kunkel