

Submitter: Kyle Collins
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1153

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

I am writing to express my firm support for Senate Bill 1153.

I believe this bill represents a unique opportunity to correct historical issues with water rights transfers in our state that have unfortunately had negative impacts of our anadromous fish populations and the habitat that sustains them.

Oregon is lucky to have abundant water resources, and generally excels beyond other states when it comes to sustaining the quality of those resources, however there are improvements to be made if we want to maintain the resources into the future.

Water is a shared resource for all Oregonians and we should be cognizant of our current impact's on these resources for future generations by taking steps now to improve water quality, particularly in the face of increasingly climatic uncertainty and land use changes.

Unfortunately, Oregon water law an has long maintained an antiquated loophole which has allowed the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to review and approve water right transfers without adequate consideration of whether the change will harm our streams.

Under current standards, water rights transfers can occur without a holistic accounting of needed water availability in streams, which in turn has frequently left waterways without the necessary water levels to maintain stream temperatures for fish, healthy municipal water quality, and our renowned river recreation opportunities. Mountains of scientific evidence have shown time and again that lower stream flows will inevitably raise stream temperatures, increasing rates of algal blooms and other harmful impacts that increase water treatment costs for community members and create unlivable conditions for our aquatic wildlife.

It appears that Senate Bill 1153 will take steps to ameliorate these issues, and ultimately improve fish habitats, water quality, and cultural values associated with our rivers and streams.

SB 1153 will ensure OWRD will appropriately evaluate the water quality/quantity impacts associated with water rights transfers and will not grant permission for any voluntary water right changes that will increase harms fish habitat and water quality. The outdated loophole in Oregon's water law associated with water rights transfers should be removed.

SB 1153 brings modern scientific understanding and environmental considerations

into our state's review process and I strongly urge your support of the bill.

Sincerely,

-Kyle Collins, Bend, OR, 97701