

March 28, 2025

**To:** Joint Committee on Ways and Means

**Subject:** Support for \$4 Million in Water Equity Funding

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice Chair Girod, Gomberg, and Smith and members of the committee

My name is Djennyfer de Melo Ferreira, and I am writing on behalf of the Necanicum Watershed Council (NWC), an environmental nonprofit organization that has benefitted from the awarded Community Water Justice funds. I support HB 3528 as it is a critical step in addressing Oregon's water challenges for all Oregonians.

Thanks to funding from the Water Equity Fund, NWC has made significant strides building and codifying shoulder-to-shoulder relationships with tribal partners and indigenous stewards of the Necanicum Basin. With Community Water Justice support, NWC was able to hire a full-time Tribal Lands and Water Steward to act as a liaison with tribal partners, increase our capacity for communications, outreach and planning, and elevate tribal voices and knowledge in our restoration work. This funding has been critical to assist our Dias del Salmón programming to promote ecological education and outreach efforts to underserved communities, including Hispanic/Latinx children of the Oregon Coast, and served as a valuable liaison between NWC and Tribal partners. As just one example of their role in our regular restoration work, the Tribal Lands and Water Steward has contributed significantly to the restoration project that improves soil and water quality in a confluence of the Necanicum River, bringing traditional ecological knowledge of holistic planting needs for the site restoration, and leading a community planting day. This type of critical capacity support is rarely available to small non-profit environmental organizations but was essential to building reciprocity into our relationships with these communities.

Oregon's water systems are under increasing pressure due to aging infrastructure, climate change, and long-standing underinvestment. These challenges disproportionately impact frontline communities—tribal nations, rural areas, low-income families, and communities of color—who often lack the resources to address water crisis effectively.

HB 3528 provides \$4 million in funding to support much-needed research and grants: \$3.2 million to the University of Oregon for research and grants that help communities address water challenges.

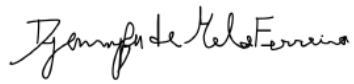
\$800,000 to Portland State University's Institute for Tribal Governments to support tribal-led water solutions.

By passing HB 3528, the Legislature will help ensure that all Oregonians, especially those most impacted, have access to clean and reliable water. This is an investment in health, safety, and resilience for our communities today and for future generations.

I urge you to support HB 3528 and continue investing in water equity for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,



Djennyfer de Melo Ferreira  
Stewardship and Restoration Director  
Necanicum Watershed Council