

Submitter: Cynthia Carson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3343

Testimony Opposing HB 3343

Members of the Oregon State Legislature,

I strongly oppose House Bill 3343, which mandates water use meters and reporting to the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) for all government entities and water rights holders, including groundwater wells and surface water rights. This bill represents excessive government overreach and infringes upon constitutional rights.

1. Unconstitutional Property Infringement

Oregon's Constitution, Article I, Section 18, prohibits the taking of private property without just compensation. Forcing private landowners to install water meters constitutes direct government intervention into private property without due process or adequate compensation.

2. Excessive Government Regulation

Requiring meters for all government entities, cities, and private water rights holders imposes unnecessary and costly compliance burdens. Oregonians already pay for water rights and adhere to regulations—this bill adds undue complexity, particularly for those relying on shared water resources.

3. Violation of Oregon Supreme Court Precedents

In *State v. Brown* (1988), the Oregon Supreme Court emphasized balancing regulation with constitutional protections. HB 3343's penalties for non-compliance are disproportionate, and alternative, less intrusive conservation measures should be considered.

4. Financial Hardship for Water Rights Holders

Mandatory meter installations and potential penalties would financially strain rural landowners, small communities, and non-profits that lack resources for compliance. The bill does not account for these economic realities.

5. Lack of Transparency and Oversight

The bill fails to clarify how collected data will be used or safeguarded, raising concerns about privacy and government overreach. Additionally, its enforcement mechanisms remain vague.

6. Threat to Property Rights

Oregon has long upheld the principle that water rights are tied to property ownership. This bill undermines individual and community control over natural resources, shifting more power to the government at the expense of property owners.

Conclusion

While responsible water use is important, HB 3343 imposes excessive regulation, violates constitutional protections, and disregards economic realities. I urge you to reject this bill in favor of balanced, fair solutions that respect property rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration.