



April 4, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways & Means

Re: **Support for funding for Water, especially HB 3806; HB 3106; HB 3316; HB 3364**

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Chairs Smith, Gomberg, Girod, and Members of the Committee:

The Deschutes River Conservancy (DRC) restores streamflow and improves water quality in the Deschutes Basin using a coordinated, collaborative, and voluntary approach. Founded in 1996 as a consensus-based, multi-stakeholder organization, the DRC's Board of Directors includes diverse representation from tribal, environmental, irrigated agriculture, and hydropower interests as well as federal, state and local government. Together with our partners we have restored over 350 cubic feet per second of flows to our basin's rivers while increasing the reliability of agricultural water rights and operations, and water supply for cities.

We are concerned about water in the state as a whole, including in the Deschutes River Basin. We advocate for greater investment in ensuring there is clean and plentiful water for all. Multiple reports have identified the need to move from a state that allocates water to one that manages it to meet the needs of tribes, fish, farmers, businesses, and drinking water in an overallocated and rapidly changing world. We all depend on water. Without water there is no economy and no life.

The Water Package identifies several themes for investment. To support all of these, we need a functioning **Water Resources Department**, and we advocate for the **OWRD budget in HB 3364**, as well as the budget bills of its sister agencies the **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**. All fourteen natural resources agencies share less than 3% of the General Fund. Greater investment is needed to ensure that we have an Oregon that Oregonians can live in.

Please support **HB 3806, Deschutes Water Bank Pilot Project Authorization**. Diverse partners in the Deschutes have collaborated extensively on this bill, and need this tool to move water around more flexibly to meet instream and out of stream needs. It models the following Water Package Themes:

- *Intelligent Adaptive Water Planning & Management*
- *Sharing & Optimizing a Limited Resource*
- *Basin Specific Planning & Management.*

In addition, please support *Water Data & Informed Decision Making*, and specifically **HB 3106, the Water Data Portal**. Please also support **HB 3116 Place-Based Planning** so communities can work on their critical water issues together.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Best,

*Kate Fitzpatrick*

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