

April 17, 2025

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

**Subject:** Support for \$4 Million in Water Equity Funding (HB 3528)

Co-Chairs Senator Kate Lieber and Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Vice Chair Senator Fred Girod, Representatives David Gomberg and Greg Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Hanna Osman, and I am a Somali immigrant and mother living in Oregon. I volunteer with culturally specific efforts that support Somali and East African immigrant and refugee families across the tri-county area. As someone connected to my community, I've witnessed how housing instability, rising utility costs, and environmental challenges—like limited access to clean, affordable water—impact our daily lives. I'm writing today in strong support of HB 3528, which represents a critical investment in water equity for communities like mine throughout Oregon.

Our communities—particularly low-income, immigrant, and refugee families—are already navigating multiple barriers to health and safety. Many of our communities live in older, substandard housing where access to safe, clean, and affordable water is not guaranteed. Some have experienced sudden water shutoffs without adequate notice or support. Others are burdened by high water bills that strain already limited household budgets. Yet these families often lack the knowledge or political power to advocate for infrastructure improvements or financial relief.

HB 3528 would help close these equity gaps by funding research and grantmaking that prioritize communities on the frontlines. We are especially supportive of the \$800,000 allocated to Portland State University's Institute for Tribal Governments to uplift tribal-led water solutions—recognizing that Indigenous communities have long led efforts to protect our shared resources. Additionally, the \$3.2 million directed to the University of Oregon will empower other underserved communities like mine, to co-create local solutions through data, research, and grant support.

This bill is not just about water—it's about dignity, safety, and justice. Water is a basic human right, and the passage of HB 3528 is a step toward ensuring that right is upheld equitably across Oregon. **I urge you to support HB 3528** and invest in water equity for all Oregonians, especially those who are most impacted and least resourced.

Thank you for your time and leadership,

Sincerely,  
Hanna Osman