



Co-Chairs Helm & Owens

House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, & Water Committee

900 Court St. NE, Salem Oregon 97301

February 2, 2026

RE: Creation of Water Professionals Appreciation Week and support of House Bill 4005

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair Finger McDonald, and Committee Members,

House Bill 4005 (HB 4005) reflects broad acknowledgement and shared support across Oregon's water sector. The League of Oregon Cities, the Special Districts Association of Oregon, the Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies, WateReuse Pacific Northwest, the Oregon Water Utility Council, and the Oregon Association of Water Utilities all recognize and celebrate the essential work performed by water professionals.

HB 4005 designates Water Professionals Appreciation Week each year in October and affirms the essential role that water professionals play in protecting public health, supporting Oregon's economy, and safeguarding the state's natural environment. This recognition is both timely and appropriate given the scale, complexity, and responsibility associated with delivering safe drinking water, and managing wastewater and stormwater systems across Oregon.

Water is foundational to Oregon's communities and economy. No sector can thrive without safe and reliable access to water. The reliable delivery of public drinking water and effective treatment of wastewater are essential to protecting public health, supporting community growth, ensuring livability, and enabling critical public safety services, including fire protection.

Oregon's water professionals operate and maintain systems that meet some of the most stringent water quality standards in the nation. Through advanced treatment processes, careful system management, and continuous monitoring, these professionals ensure that drinking water from public water systems is filtered, cleaned, tested, and distributed under the supervision of operators certified by the Oregon Health Authority. Approximately 77 percent of Oregonians rely on public water systems for safe drinking water each day.

In addition, hundreds of millions of gallons of wastewater are safely managed every day through thousands of miles of sanitary sewer infrastructure and domestic wastewater treatment plants across the state. This work protects both public health and the environment and supports healthy rivers, streams, and watersheds under the supervision of operators certified by the Department of Environmental Quality.

Water professionals also serve as essential stewards of Oregon's natural resources. Through careful management of water withdrawals, treatment processes, and discharge practices, they balance environmental protection with community needs, promote conservation and sustainability, and advance the long-term resilience of Oregon's watersheds. Many of these professionals work 24 hours a day, seven days a week – including nights, weekends, and holidays – to maintain and upgrade critical infrastructure and plan for the future of Oregon's most essential resource.

HB 4005 also serves an important public education and workforce awareness purpose by helping Oregonians better understand the important functions water utilities perform. The designation further encourages Oregonians to learn about careers in the water and wastewater industries and consider entering this critical public service field.

Respectfully submitted,

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