



Co-Chairs Helm & Owens

House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources & Water Committee

900 Court St. NE, Salem Oregon 97301

February 3, 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,

I am writing to express strong support for House Bill 4005 (HB 4005), which reflects broad consensus and shared commitment across Oregon's water sector.

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

With over 30 years of working in the water industry, I can attest that water is the foundation of Oregon's prosperity. No sector can thrive without safe, reliable water, wastewater, and stormwater services are the cornerstone upon which Oregon is built. Public drinking water and effective wastewater treatment are critical to protecting health, supporting community growth, ensuring livability, and enabling vital public safety services, including fire protection.

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

Similarly, billions of gallons of wastewater are safely managed daily through thousands of miles of sewer infrastructure and treatment plants. This work protects public health and the environment, sustaining healthy rivers, streams, and watersheds under the oversight of operators certified by the Department of Environmental Quality.

Water professionals are stewards of Oregon's natural resources. Through responsible water withdrawals, treatment, and discharge practices, they balance environmental protection with community needs, promote conservation, and strengthen the long-term resilience of Oregon's watersheds. Many work around the clock, nights, weekends, and holidays—to operate,

maintain and upgrade critical infrastructure and plan for the future of Oregon's most essential resource.

HB 4005 will serve as an important public education and workforce awareness tool, helping Oregonians understand the vital functions water utilities perform. It will also encourage exploration of careers in water, wastewater, and stormwater services—critical fields that safeguard public health and environmental quality.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason M Canady



Public Works Director  
City of Grants Pass