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February 4, 2026

Representatives Ken Helm, Co-Chair and Mark Owens, Co-Chair
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 4005

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, and Members of the House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water, thank you for the opportunity to provide background information on House Bill 4005. My name is Alison Hopcroft and I am the Partnerships Manager at the Institute for Natural Resources at Portland State University.

Workforce development is at the center of PSU's mission and includes preparing students for careers as water professionals through majors in Civil and Environmental Engineering, Geology, Geography, Environmental Science and Management, and many others.

Recognizing and appreciating water professionals on an annual basis is critical to building and retaining the water workforce that Oregon relies on. From supporting our drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, to agricultural, recreational, industrial and ecological uses, Oregon depends on having well-trained water professionals doing their work 365 days a year. Water professionals ensure that our economy moves forward, and that water is available for the environmental, social, and cultural needs of the people who live here.

For the last several years, my colleagues and I have been working to assess the water workforce needs in Oregon and determine how we can best respond to those needs. The public is frequently unaware of the multifaceted, important work of water professionals, and as a result, students are unaware of the excellent opportunities that await them in the water workforce. Creating a Water Professionals Appreciation Week would address both issues and shine a light on this important group of professionals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 4005.

Sincerely,
Alison Hopcroft, Partnerships Manager
Institute for Natural Resources, Portland State University