



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

April 1, 2025

To: **Reps. Helm and Owens, Co-Chairs of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water and Members of the Committee**

Re: **HB 2803 – Increases Certain Fees Related to Water – Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon has studied water issues since 1969 and in 2009-2010 provided our members with an updated [study](#) and participated in the first (and second) Integrated Water Resources Strategy. We have engaged with others and the agency as funding for management of Oregon's waters has been a challenge. *"The League acknowledges that all water users must share in the cost of water management."* We have consistently supported the 50/50 funding split between permittees and the public, although we commend Director Gall's recent attempt at increasing permit processing by pulling a couple of assistant water master positions (funded by General Funds) beyond that split.

We have also engaged in seeking alternative funding; for instance, we have advocated for consideration of an annual fee for water rights holders as early as 2009 ([SB 740](#)) since all of Oregon's waters belong to the public. But we must provide adequate funding for this agency's water management work, even if the level of fee increases is more than we would all like to see. Until a new, fair source of funding is provided, we must **support HB 2803** as the solution available to assure management of Oregon's water.

We are willing to work with others to find another solution as we have since 2009. But we cannot have this agency less than fully staffed in order to do the mission this legislature and the general public expects. Until then, we ask that you **support HB 2803** and recommend passage and send the bill to Ways and Means for final action by the end of session.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Bentson".

Lisa Bentson
President LWVOR

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Lynch".

Peggy Lynch
Natural Resources Coordinator

Cc: [Ivan Gall](#), Director, Oregon Water Resources Dept.