



To: Senator Jackie Dingfelder, Chair
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Anita Winkler, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Mark Landauer, Special Districts Association of Oregon
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Date: March 19, 2009

Subject: SB 193 -1 Amendment

A coalition of groups whose members have frequent interaction with the Water Resources Department offers these comments in opposition to the -1 amendment proposed for SB 193.

The members of the coalition served on the Governor's advisory group for his Headwaters to Ocean (H2O) Initiative. SB 193 evolved from discussions in that advisory group. There was broad agreement in that group of the need to move forward on the development of an integrated water resources strategy for Oregon.

While there was not consensus in the group as to the role that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife should have in the development of the strategy, there was agreement by the majority in the group that ODFW should not have a role equivalent to OWRD or DEQ. The testimony during the Committee's hearing on this bill mirrored the opinions of the H2O advisory group: all the testimony with one exception supported not giving ODF&W a role equal to the role of the Water Resources Department and the Department of Environmental Quality. Rather, there is a general agreement that ODFW should have a role similar to that of other agencies that do not have a statutory responsibility to manage water quantity or water quality.

The coalition members maintain that ODF&W's role is similar to the role of other agencies that have an interest in water quantity and water quality but whose interest does not extend to managing the water. The -1 amendment to SB 193 elevates ODF&W to a role above that of its sister agencies even though its statutory responsibilities do not extend to managing water. Its role is advisory to the management agencies and as such does not differ from other agencies (such as the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Human Services) that also provide advice to OWRD and DEQ.

We oppose the provisions in the -1 amendment that elevate ODF&W in the integrated water strategy, but we support the rest of the -1 amendment. We ask the Committee to carefully consider the testimony on the bill and the justification for giving one natural resources agency preference over other natural resources agencies that are similarly situated in their advisory role to OWRD and DEQ before agreeing to that provision of -1 amendment.