



May 26, 2022

Tom Byler, Director
Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301

Mike Britton, Executive Manager
North Unit Irrigation District
2024 NW Beech St,
Madras, OR 977441

Courtney Crowell, Water Policy Advisor
Office of Governor Kate Brown
900 Court Street, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301

Craig Horrell, President
Deschutes Basin Board of Control
2024 NW Beech St,
Madras, OR 977441

RE: Critical water needs in the Deschutes Basin

Director Byler, Ms. Crowell, Mr. Britton, and Mr. Horrell:

As bipartisan legislators committed to a sustainable water future for all Oregonians, we would like to express our appreciation for your leadership in the field of water resources. As you know, our shared resources are increasingly strained by significant pressures such as persistent drought, with serious impacts to communities across the state.

It has come to our attention that a proposal has been made on temporary water right transfer T-13703, which would enable one party to provide 560 acre-feet of water to benefit the extreme need for irrigation water in North Unit Irrigation District. Recognizing growing public interest in this area, measures such as this proposal have the potential to free up significant volumes of water. We as state legislators encourage the Water Resources Department and irrigation districts to seek creative ways to facilitate water sharing that respond to the unique and dire need for water in the Deschutes Basin this irrigation season.

We understand that existing statutes and administrative rules on water transfers will govern actions for this season, but we stand ready to support water sharing that can help keep farmers in business during severe drought while at the same time honoring the Habitat Conservation Plan that the basin has adopted for the protection of fish and wildlife. We look forward to making continued progress together as we navigate the serious water challenges that confront us.

Sincerely,

Representative Ken Helm, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, and Water
House District 34 –Washington County

Representative Mark Owens, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, and Water
House District 60 – Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur,
and part of Lake County



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vikki Breese-Iverson".

Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson
House Republican Leader
House District 55 – Prineville

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim".

Senator Tim Knopp
Senate Republican Leader
Senate District 27 – Bend

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Bonham".

Representative Daniel Bonham, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Business & Labor
House District 59 – The Dalles

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn Findley".

Senator Lynn Findley, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Energy & Environment
Senate District 30 – Baker, Grant, Harney, Jefferson,
Malheur, Wasco, Wheeler and parts of Clackamas,
Deschutes, Lake and Marion Counties

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Kropf".

Representative Jason Kropf, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Economic Development & Prosperity
House District 54 – Bend