



March 5, 2023

To House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

From: Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

Re: **Support for HB 3231 (Water Recycling) With a Suggested Improvement**

Chair Helm and Committee Members,

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

OACD supports HB 3231 which is intended to promote water recycling programs in Oregon. Use of treated wastewater for beneficial purposes has been successfully and safely practiced throughout the Country for decades. There are many ways that this water can be put to beneficial use from irrigation of crops and landscape to creating and improving wildlife habitat. When recycled water is used in lieu of other water supplies it makes all our water go further. Unfortunately, public perception and institutional barriers have hindered the ability to move good projects forward. The work assigned to the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Water Resources in this bill would help break down the barriers to water recycling. The bill also makes clear the State's intention to promote water recycling.

The costs of water recycling infrastructure, operation and maintenance can be substantial barriers. HB 3231 lacks any specific mention of cost. It is recommended that the bill be strengthened by making sure that the recommendations that are developed are put in the context of cost. This can be achieved by adding a requirement in the report back to the legislature as follows:

SECTION 1 (4) (f) Cost implications of the recommendations to improve water recycling projects and programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stan Dean".

Stan Dean, Advocacy Committee Chair
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
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