



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old 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.

March 18, 2021

To: [House Committee on Water](#)
Rep. Ken Helm, Chair
Rep. Mark Owens and Jeff Reardon, Vice Chairs
Members of the Subcommittee

Re: **HB 2594-1 (&-2) – Protection of Drinking Water Sources near Forestland – SUPPORT**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon has strong positions in support of water quality and quantity for all Oregonians, aquatic creatures and wildlife. We have engaged with the Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on water quality issues, including working to be sure they have the resources needed to protect Oregon's drinking water. We engage the Dept. of Forestry on a regular basis and have a statutory member on the Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Advisory Committee.

We have raised the issue of the loss of federal monies due to issues around the Coastal Zone Management area due to sediment and pesticides in coastal streams. This [document](#) should provide the committee with a clear history regarding the lack of resolution around this important issue. Although we recognize the Memorandum of Understanding that is currently being negotiated related to aquatic species and forest practices, this bill addresses drinking water sources.

In discussing staffing resources with DEQ and the suggestion that a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process should be used to address each potentially challenged stream, the agency is struggling to work under court order on a current list of streams and rivers where TMDLs are needed. They do expect to meet their court-mandated timelines, but their current staffing capacity to address new streams will be limited. The agency had requested 4 additional staff in their 2021-23 budget. The Governor's budget (POP 121) would provide two additional positions: one to support development of TMDLs in their eastern region and one to support implementation of the Willamette Basin TMDL. Neither would allow for addressing the many small streams where the many small drinking water sources exist.

HB 2594 with amendments is a small step needed to begin to address protection of drinking water sources, especially for rural Oregonians. **We ask that you amend HB 2594 and move this bill forward.**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

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