

May 2, 2013



OREGON
ASSOCIATION OF
NURSERIES™



To: Chair Witt, members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

RE: Support for Senate Bill 199-A

Chair Witt, members of the Committee,

We are writing to voice our support of Senate Bill 199-A which extends the sunset on Oregon's split-season instream leasing program by ten years. SB 199-A passed the Senate with 28 Aye votes and two abstentions. We are a diverse group of water users, conservation groups, municipalities and water stakeholders with a common goal: to advocate for common sense water policies that move Oregon's economy, communities, and environment toward a secure water future.

With the adoption of Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy in 2012, now is the time to capitalize on momentum and enact water policy for Oregon that creates jobs to help grow our economy, keeps our cities healthy, strengthens vital agricultural production, and protects and enhances our environmental assets. Toward this end, we are focused on three key areas: water supply management, conservation, and water quality.

Split season instream leasing is an important tool for water supply management and conservation. Split season leasing is a voluntary mechanism that allows water users to capitalize on the value their water has for fish and ecosystems late in the summer while maintaining the productivity of their water in the spring and early summer. The tool allows water right holders to use their water right for irrigation or other uses for part of the water year, and then be compensated to lease it instream late in the summer when it matters most to fish.

Programs like this one are the kinds of tools that Oregon water users need now and into the future. They value the irreplaceable productivity of water for irrigation and other uses while providing flexibility to address instream needs at targeted times. Please support SB 199-A and extend the sunset on the split season instream leasing program.

Sincerely,

The Freshwater Trust

Oregon Environmental Council

The Nature Conservancy

League of Oregon Cities

Oregon Association of Nurseries

Oregon Water Resources Congress

Special Districts Association of Oregon