



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 96-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.

February 13, 2017

To: House Committee on Energy and Environment
Representative Ken Helm, Chair
Representatives Mark Johnson and Karin Power, Vice Chairs
Members of the Committee

Re: HB 2295 Water Resource Dept. Fee Increases – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon first adopted positions on Water Policy and Planning in 1977, following Water Quality positions adopted in 1969. In 2007, League members, frustrated with the silos around water regulation, set about to restudy Water in Oregon. We published a study in 2009 and a follow up in 2010 and, in April 2011, we adopted a consolidated set of positions upon which we testify today.

In 2013, we used these positions to support temporary fee increases under HB 2259. Today we come to support HB 2295 which again increases fees for permits and other regulations around our water resources. In 1909, Oregon water law explicitly stated that “**all water within the state from all sources of water supply belongs to the public**” (ORS 537.110); therefore, the League believes that regulated public policy actions should require a public share in the cost of such regulations. HB 2295 provides such a cost share.

Timely processing of water-right transactions is important for both the private sector and the public. Assuring stable funding for these actions is critical to both our economy and as protection of the public’s water. We attended stakeholder meetings with interested parties related to the Water Resources Department over the interim. We believe there was general consensus that the fees in HB 2295 are needed to assure this goal is met.

Of particular importance to the League is addressing dam safety. With the increasing effects of a changing climate and the extreme rain events occurring, it is time to take dam inspections seriously. The League has supported the interagency work where, when a Dept. of Agriculture staffer is visiting a property where a dam exists, they might do a cursory review to let Water Resources know if they see a concern. Interagency sharing helps us all. But that does not take the place of expert inspections. We hope to support additional programs around dam safety in the future.

Today, we ask that you pass HB 2295 out of committee with a “do pass” recommendation to Ways and Means.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.


Norman Turrill
LWVOR President


Peggy Lynch
LWVOR Natural Resources Policy Coordinator

cc: Tom Byler, Director, Water Resources Department
Lauri Aunan, Governor’s Natural Resources Policy Advisor