



Oregon
Environmental
Council
It's Your Oregon

222 NW Davis Street
Suite 309
Portland, OR 97209-3900
503.222.1963
www.oeconline.org

Testimony to the House Energy and Environment Committee on House Bill 2722

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**Lori Grant, Water Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) supports HB 2722 as a common sense approach to addressing sustainable practices and enhancing the long-term conservation and management of water.

Nationwide, landscape irrigation accounts for nearly one-third of all residential water use, totaling nearly 9 billion gallons per day. A 500 square-foot lawn can use more than 18,000 gallons of water per year. And in dry areas, some experts estimate that as much as 50 percent of water used for irrigation is wasted due to evaporation, wind, or runoff caused by inefficient methods and systems. Taken together, these statistics show that lawns offer great potential for water savings, regardless of geography or season.

OEC supported legislation in 2016 that allowed homeowner associations to reduce irrigation in times of drought or water scarcity, and HB 2722 extends that same responsible approach to owners of lawns, gardens and landscaped areas within condominiums and planned communities. Owners should be permitted to make this conservation-oriented choice whether there is a drought emergency or not, and we appreciate that HB 2722 permits associations to alter their irrigation and landscaping requirements to reduce watering regardless of season or geography.

The conservation benefits of the choice to abstain from irrigating a lawn, garden or other landscaped area—at any time—will cascade beyond the local level and ultimately support Oregon's shared economy and durability.

By proactively removing legal barriers to sustainable water use, residents of Oregon can conserve water, save money and ensure our state and economy are better prepared in the face of climate change. We urge your support for HB 2722.