



HB 2722

**Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon
By Kimberley Priestley
Submitted to the House Energy and Environment Committee
March 6, 2017**

Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources.

WaterWatch of Oregon supports HB 2272

HB 2272 would render a planned community's landscaping and/or architectural guidelines, as well as any governing documents, that impose irrigation requirements on homeowners void and unenforceable when, in relation to the homeowners association's location:

- Oregon's Governor declares that a continuing drought exists or is likely to exist,
- Water Resources Commission finds that a severe, continuing drought exists or is likely to occur,
- An ordinance is adopted by the governing body of a political subdivision requires conservation curtailment, or
- The homeowner's association adopts a rule to reduce or eliminate irrigation water use.

Further, to help encourage conservation outside of times of drought, this bill allows a homeowner association to adopt rules that require reduction or elimination of irrigation and/or permit or require the replacement of turf or other landscape vegetation with xeriscape, notwithstanding governing documents and/or irrigation/architectural guidelines.

While this bill is not as comprehensive as HB 4090 (2016), HB 2272 does represent a solid step forward in promoting water conservation during times of drought, likely drought or otherwise. That homeowners within these planned communities would otherwise have to keep their lawns green in the face of water shortages goes against numerous federal, state and private efforts to promote water conservation.

In conclusion, HB 2272 removes some existing barriers that currently limit homeowners within planned communities from participating in water conservation; thus, in whole, this bill does advance water conservation both during drought and otherwise. As the state is experiencing the real effects of climate change and increasing occurrences of drought, conservation is a necessary component of Oregon's water future. We urge the Committee to pass HB 2722.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

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