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### NEWS RELEASE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hazel Tylinski, [hazel.tylinski@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:hazel.tylinski@oregonlegislature.gov)

Connor Radnovich, [connor.radnovich@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:connor.radnovich@oregonlegislature.gov)

### Legislative Leaders Release Bipartisan \$110 Million Drought and Water Security Budget Framework

*The 2023-2025 Drought and Water Security Budget framework would build a sustainable water future for all of Oregon, delivering time-sensitive updates to water systems that families, farms and wildlife need daily*

**SALEM, Ore.** - Today, Legislative Leaders announced the 2023-2025 Drought and Water Security Budget framework. After years of drought harming Oregonians statewide, this set of investments is aimed at ensuring there is a fresh, clean and safe water supply for Oregon families, farms, fish and wildlife.

“Water is an essential part of human and natural life,” said [\*\*Representative Ken Helm \(D-Beaverton\)\*\*](#), Chair of the [House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water](#). “If approved, these investments will help us protect and preserve water access for communities across Oregon, our natural ecosystems, and Oregon’s thriving agriculture network and industry.”

A robust Drought and Water Security Budget is all the more critical given that the west has been experiencing a [22-year megadrought](#) and [most of Central Oregon remains in severe drought](#). Targeted investments in this budget package framework would support collaborative efforts in drought-affected regions that bring Oregonians together to increase our resilience to increased water scarcity.

The state investments in this framework are strategically designed to leverage time-sensitive federal money from the bipartisan [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021](#).

Legislative Leaders' 23-25 Drought and Water Security Budget framework, if approved, would build a sustainable water future for urban and rural communities and systems across the state by investing in existing and new resources in order to:

- Modernize Oregon's critical irrigation infrastructure to better serve the families, farms, fish and wildlife that interact with our systems;
- Protect, enhance and restore critical sources of drinking and other types of water systems that support local industries and ecosystems; and
- Bolster water-related data necessary to more efficiently detect risks and coordinate water management.

"The last few years have been a sobering preview of hard times for Oregon communities, farmers and all of us who depend on them," said [Senator Jeff Golden \(D-Ashland\)](#), Chair of the [Senate Committee On Natural Resources](#). "This bipartisan package is well thought-out and takes a big step to get us more prepared."

"**Water is the lifeblood of the rural communities I serve,**" said [Representative Mark Owens \(HD-60\)](#), Vice Chair of the [House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water](#). "Despite a wet winter, most rural communities are still experiencing drought or the effects of drought. We live in a water constrained environment and the water related challenges we face will only get more intense. I had the privilege once again to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to identify significant bipartisan investments for families, farms, and fish. These investments, which build on important bipartisan investments made in 2021 and 2022, represent critical down payments in helping our communities adapt and increasing Oregon's water security."

*Climate-related emergencies continue to threaten our way of life in Oregon. This session, Legislative Leaders have focused on building resilient communities and addressing the water challenges threatening farmers, families, and wildlife in urban and rural communities and rivers across our state. The 23-25 Drought and Water Security Budget framework is a key part of this work.*

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