

City Council
Report Date: February 5, 2021

City of Salem

Bill Number	Position	Priority
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HB 3103 INTRO	Support	2
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Relating to water uses.

Authorizes holder of water right certificate that allows storage of water to change use of water, subject to certain requirements.

2/5/2021 - For over 30 years, municipal water providers in the Willamette Basin have been working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), and other state agencies and stakeholders to reallocate the storage space in the 13 Willamette Basin Project reservoirs. This stored water is one of the few remaining water supplies to meet future needs within the basin.

Congress approved the Willamette Reallocation at the end of 2020. Now the state must complete a transfer of the stored water to multiple beneficial uses. However, OWRD recently determined they lack statutory authority to accept and process character (type) of use transfer applications after decades of established practice. OWRD's determination eliminated a crucial administrative process needed for efficient and cost-effective transfers of water from one use to another leaving municipal water providers in the Willamette Basin without a viable path to access stored water. HB 3103 clarifies that OWRD has the ability to resume accepting and processing applications to change the use of stored water allowing municipal water providers access to stored water to meet future demands.