

Summary of House Bill 2257(2013)



OUR MISSION

To serve the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management through two key goals:

- (1) to directly address Oregon's water supply needs, and
- (2) to restore and protect streamflows and watersheds in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of Oregon's ecosystems, economy, and quality of life.

HB 2257 (Formerly LC 657)

Authority to Change the Name and Contact Information on a Water Right Certificate

Goal

Update and modernize the state's water right certificates and related databases with accurate name and contact information. Oregon's Government Efficiency Task Force has stated support for these objectives.

Background

Today, there are no statutory provisions that allow the name and contact information on a water right certificate to be changed, even if the holder of the certificate has passed away or sold off interests. There are about 85,000 water rights in Oregon today; about 71,000 of them are certificated.

The state needs the ability to respond to holders of water rights who are asking to modify the contact information on these certificates, especially in light of recent court cases, favoring the name written on a water right certificate over other factors. Such a change would facilitate other process efficiencies, such as communicating with water right holders, mapping water rights, updating the water rights database, and improving compliance with measurement and reporting conditions. Such a change would necessitate a fee, to fully pay for the required staff time.

Proposal

Grant the Oregon Water Resources Department authority to change the name and contact information on water right certificates.

Stakeholder Feedback

Water right holders welcome the opportunity to update their water rights for a fee, as long as the program is voluntary. Irrigation districts, water districts, and municipal water providers have requested an amendment, clarifying that patrons and residents of their service territories are not eligible to change the name on certificates to individual names.

Additional Notes

This bill comports with Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy Recommended Action 2D: "Update water right records with contact information." It also relates to WRD Budget package #207, which would authorize the receipt of fees to self-fund the program.

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