



KATE BROWN  
Governor

November 6, 2015

Mr. John Roberts  
Chair, Oregon Water Resources Commission  
c/o Tom Byler, Director  
Oregon Water Resources Department  
725 Summer Street  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Roberts:

I want to thank you and the Commission for your leadership on the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, and commend the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) for leading implementation of Executive Order No. 15-09, Directing State Agencies to Plan for Resiliency to Drought, to Meet the Challenge that a Changing Climate Brings. As you know, Section III of the Executive Order directs OWRD to address drought – including long-term drought resiliency planning – in Oregon's 2017 update to the Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

I want to raise one other issue with you that relates to drought. That is how Oregon evaluates proposals by state agencies that hold water rights to transfer those rights to others. In the context of land management, Oregon generally follows some form of broad public interest review when an agency is disposing of land. With the growing scarcity of water as illustrated by the historic drought Oregon faced this year, I would like the Oregon Water Resources Commission to consider developing future policy regarding the disposition of state-held water rights. As Oregon plans for resiliency to drought, the Commission should consider whether it is appropriate to provide for a broader look at the disposition of state-held water rights, in much the same way that we typically look at disposition of state-owned lands.

If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact my Natural Resources Policy Director, Richard Whitman.

Sincerely,

Governor Kate Brown

cc: Thomas Byler, Director, Oregon Water Resources Department  
Curt Melcher, Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

