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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 482, H.D. 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

February 28, 2013, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308

Good afternoon Chair Luke, Vice-Chairs Nishimoto and Johanson, and members of the Committee:

My name is David Henkin, and I am an attorney with Earthjustice. We appreciate the opportunity to offer this testimony regarding House Bill No. 482, House Draft 1. Earthjustice strongly supports this bill, which would eliminate the ability for large landowners to claim a tax credit for legal fees associated with litigation to secure public trust water resources for their own private use.

Having the public subsidize litigation by large landowner-diverters makes no sense. It creates perverse incentives, encouraging landowner-diverters to stonewall and delay community efforts to restore balance in river and stream flows and to defend the public trust in native stream animals and plants and in the perpetuation of traditional and customary practices.

Contrary to the claims of those who defend giving tax breaks for water litigation, the credits have nothing to do with helping small farmers. Small farmers receive water through the municipal system, at far more expensive rates than corporate farming, which is subsidized through large-scale diversion of public river and stream flows.

We respectfully ask you to pass HB 482, HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

LATE TESTIMONY