

Smith Holly

From: Sabolch Horvat <sabolch.horvat@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2017 9:17 PM
To: HEE Exhibits
Subject: Testimony in Support of House Bills 2705, 2706, and 2707

Dear Chair Helm, Committee Vice-Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HB 2705 because measurement of water use has been identified as a need across Oregon for decades, but little progress has been made despite continued calls for smarter water management. Knowing how much and how quickly we are using our water resources is critical to ensuring fair and sensible management decisions – especially when considering new water permit applications in water scarce regions. In our current time there is growing scarcity of water and there are states with goals of implementing 100% water meter installations among certain timelines, whereas other municipalities are implementing voluntary water metering. HB 2705 would be a good step forward for Oregon.

I support HB 2707 because one of the key findings of a December 2016 audit of the Oregon Water Resources Department's effectiveness is that groundwater protection needs more focus. However, at the pace of only two groundwater basin studies completed every five years, it will take decades to have a full accounting of our groundwater resources. Nearly one million Oregonians rely on groundwater for their drinking water source, and groundwater demand is increasing. More than 5,000 farms in Oregon rely on well water to survive. Groundwater also supplies a base flow for rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands – an important consideration for maintaining the health of Oregon's fish runs and spectacular landscapes.

I support HB 2706 because we need to invest in our future. The Oregon Water Resources Department found that the agency is chronically underfunded and lacks the resources to adequately manage our state's surface and groundwaters. Without a stable funding source, the Department can't fulfill its responsibilities to ensure the long-term sustainability of Oregon's rivers and water supplies, economy, and quality of life.

Water is essential to our livelihood. I support these proactive measures which will help to protect our common good.

Thank you for reading my comments, some of which referenced verbiage from the WaterWatch of Oregon.

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