

March 20, 2017

House Committee on Energy and Environment

RE: HB 2705, HB 2706, HB 2707

Testimony of:

Ken Bailey, Vice President  
Orchard View Farms  
4055 Skyline Road  
The Dalles, OR 97058

Water has always been not only a priority but a necessity for much of Oregon's agriculture. Oregon's water policy needs to work for everyone so it is very important that we learn more about the amount of water used in Oregon and how it is used. We need to work together to set water policy that makes sense and is not punitive or cost prohibitive for those that currently are dependent on access to adequate water.

HB 2705 - We certainly would like to know how much water is currently being used and that should apply to all water users, not just those with current water rights. There are significant numbers of water users that have not been required to file for water rights or permits that could be affecting current or future water right holders. We should include all water users in the planning for any new water policy.

HB 2706 - We can support an annual water right or permit fee to provide some stable funding of the Oregon Water Resources Department. Water is very important to us and we need to be assured it is being properly monitored and administered. We do not agree with a policy that does not charge a fee or require a permit for some uses and not others of this public resource, all users should be included.

HB - 2707 - We do support the need for additional funding for the Oregon Water Resources Department to help the Department learn more about our groundwater supply and how it is interconnected with our surface waters. We certainly understand that state money is in short supply this year as it is in all years but the demands for water and the need for new water uses are becoming critical. It is past the time we should be putting more resources into learning about one of our most important natural resources.

We need to place water as one of our highest priorities and work together to develop methods to be more efficient with what we have and learn how we might make more water available for all the uses we put it to.