

## Smith Holly

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**From:** Paul Lipscomb <judgelipscomb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2017 8:32 AM  
**To:** Rep.KenHelm@state.or.us; rep.@state.or.usmarkjohnson; Rep Power;  
rep.philbarnhart@state.or.us; rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us; rep.deborahboone@state.or.us;  
Rep Holvey; Rep Reschke; Rep Smith D  
**Cc:** Smith Holly  
**Subject:** HB 2706: Testimony in Favor

Chair Helm and members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment:

Please accept this email in lieu of my oral testimony for it is not possible for me to travel to Salem this week for your hearing on this bill. I would ask that my remarks be made part of the record in this matter as well.

I am a resident of Central Oregon. I also sit on the Deschutes Basin Study Work Group Steering Committee, a very diverse but collaborative group of individuals and organizations that are working together to improve water resources and water uses so that in the future there will be enough water for our farms and ranches as well as for our cities and our rivers. I, of course, do not and cannot speak for that group. But while we may not always agree on the details, irrigators and environmentalists throughout Oregon can and have worked together to preserve our common resources for the common good of all.

Those of us in Central Oregon, and particularly those who study water use and water resources know the importance of water to Oregon's economy today and in the future. We also know that past water practises are no longer sustainable going forward.

In order to manage our water resources better, we need to be able to measure our water uses and our water resources better. Simply put, we cannot manage effectively that which we cannot measure accurately.

Stream flows and groundwater are interconnected by aquifers and springs. Whatever we do in one part of that interconnected system affects the rest of that system. Measuring stream flow is important, but measuring stream flow alone is not enough; we also must measure groundwater resources and uses.

We know that many groundwater basins in Oregon are already oversubscribed. Irrigators are digging their existing wells deeper and deeper to maintain the same flow of water for crops. Cities, too, that rely on groundwater are seeing those resources gradually dry up.

This has happened before in our neighboring southwestern states, and it is now happening in California as well.

We can and should do better. The means are within reach. But if we continue to ignore this growing problem, then we are doomed to repeat the history of other states which chose to do nothing.

I understand that some farmers and ranchers get nervous whenever anyone seeks even a minor change to past water use practises. But they must realize that the water resources of our state are owned by all the people of our state. Those with water rights do not own that water. They have merely acquired the right to use the public's water for a beneficial purpose of their own, without waste. It is understandable that they would prefer to exercise that use without cost as well. But in times of increasing shortages, that simply is no longer possible.

Please pass HB 2705 and its companion bills HB 2706 and 2707.

Thank you,

Paul J. Lipscomb,  
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