



HB 2705: It Doesn't Measure Up

Water is the lifeblood for Oregon's farmers and ranchers; it is essential for the Oregon's agricultural economy. Agriculture contributes an estimated \$50 billion dollars to the state's economy, making it Oregon's second largest economic driver. Given the importance of water to all of Oregon's 220+ commodities, the state must protect farmers' water rights and ensure that management decisions are workable for Oregon's farmers and ranchers.

HB 2705 is unnecessary and impractical. HB 2705 would require installation of technologically advanced measurement devices on all non-exempt¹ water rights and reporting of measurement results to OWRD. It authorizes OWRD to impose a punitive penalty of up to \$500 per day, with no exceptions for equipment failure. This one-size-fits-all approach to measurement is inappropriate for several reasons:

- **It's data for data's sake.** Certain water users and entities must report under their water rights. Presently, OWRD lacks the resources to process and analyze that data. Landowners should not be required to incur the cost of providing data to OWRD that it cannot use.
- **The cost of compliance to users would be significant.** The cost of buying *the best* technology will be significant for farmers, especially considering that most have more than one diversion. OFB estimates average costs of compliance to range from \$1000 to \$20,000+ depending on the diversion type.
- **Measurement is not necessary in all areas of the state.**
- **The state already has measurement plans and priorities based on data and information needs.**



These bills were crafted without the engagement of the community that would be taxed and regulated under the bills. As a result, they are not workable for water users and would impose significant costs on already struggling farm families. If the Legislature is serious about improving water management and efficiency, farmers must be part of the conversation.

¹ Non-exempt wells are wells that are exempt from the Department's permitting process, and include domestic wells, stockwater wells, and other well categories.