



HB 2705, Water Measuring Devices, HB 2706 Water User's Fee, and HB 2707 General Fund Allocation

Testimony for House Energy and Environment – Jody Wisner – 3.22.2017

We support each of the bills before you today, addressing water resource issues in Oregon.

We note that in cities and water districts serving primarily urban areas, the local users are expected to pay the cost of developing, maintaining and delivering their water supply, users, not the General Fund. For example, in Washington County there is a massive project which will bring additional water needed by residential and business users from the Willamette River to Beaverton, Hillsboro, etc. Who will pay for that project? The ratepayers. Similarly, when water infrastructure fails in our small cities, they are offered the option to borrow money from the state to make improvements. In fact, some beach communities have made clear their desire to use lodging taxes to address the stressors on their water systems, because they arise only during high tourist season.

But today you hear objections to users paying for the cost of measuring devices and a \$100/well fee, primarily from those in rural areas, who don't believe they should contribute to addressing the water resource problems their own use has generated.

It is well operators, be they public water systems, residents, or farmers who have for decades been drawing down our underground water supply, creating an emerging problem in many parts of the state. Similarly, those drawing from streams and rivers have changed those resources. The book Cadillac Desert highlighted the problem in the 80's. Today you have before you bills asking for the measuring efforts that should have begun then, and a small annual fee that asks users to bear some of the cost of addressing their problem.

If users -- whose property value is dependent upon water -- are unwilling to help solve the problem, then certainly the General Fund should not be used.

We read the bills and follow the money