

## Smith Holly

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**From:** Laurie O'Connor <laurieoc53@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2017 4:05 PM  
**To:** HEE Exhibits  
**Subject:** HB 2705, 2706, 2707

Sirs:

I am a resident, land owner, small livestock operator in Harney County. My husband and I have lived here since 1989, and have watched with some alarm the runaway increase in sprinkler irrigation and intensive farming which has quite recently spread over what used to be a dry land habitat.

We know many people throughout the county who have lost their domestic wells in the past 4-5 years, and many others who have been forced to deepen their wells, often resulting in poor water quality. Their wells were all stable until they found their property surrounded by newly farmed fields sustained by massive sprinkler irrigation systems. Our domestic well has measured steady declines in the past 3 years. And in that same period, the landscape surrounding us has changed drastically, converting natural sage grasslands into intensively farmed and irrigated fields.

While I am aware the community has several boards and councils searching for "solutions" to our obvious water deficit, I am not confident that they will make the necessary hard decisions in time to stabilize our water resources. Without water, our county will face a new economic and social disaster, as dozens of families would be forced to leave their rural residences. Agricultural usage must be held to a sustainable level, before it is too late! The unregulated expansion for agricultural well permits from the past 16 years places an unfair burden on the domestic well residents.

I do not feel we can afford to wait 3-5 years to analyze the data, when the facts are so very clear. Hydrologists have estimated that Harney County is annually pumping out 11 billion more gallons than it's recharge rate. Harney County permitted 235 new irrigation wells since 2010! Even though there is a moratorium on new well permits, holding this rate is not going to cure our regional water deficit.

As such, I am fully supportive of all three House Bills 2705, 2706, 2707.

Thank you,  
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