



"The Voice of Oregon's Wheat Producers Since 1926"

MEASURE: HB 4101  
EXHIBIT: 28  
2012 SESSION H. ENERGY, ENV. & WATER  
DATE: 2-14-12 PAGES: 1  
SUBMITTED BY: Tyson Raymond

**Testimony before the House Energy, Environment  
And Water Committee  
Respectfully Submitted by Tyson Raymond, President  
The Oregon Wheat Growers League  
February 14, 2012**

**Co-Chair Bailey, Co-Chair Gilliam and Members of the Committee:**

RE: Support for HB 4101

The Oregon Wheat Growers League is a non-profit trade association representing over 4000 wheat and barley producers across the state of Oregon. Although commonly thought of as a product grown largely in eastern Oregon, wheat is an agricultural product produced in 22 of Oregon's 36 counties.

The value of wheat production varies widely however, and is highly dependent on the amount of moisture available during certain periods of the growing cycle. Irrigated wheat can be three to five times more productive on the same acreage as compared to dry land production. The availability of water can, and does, make a substantial difference on the investment and profitability of producers as well as the long-term viability of many farms in eastern Oregon.

HB 4101 would allow the withdrawal and storage of water from the Columbia River during peak winter month periods that would be used to irrigate additional acreage in eastern Oregon. This acreage would, in turn, allow higher production of farm products that could include growing higher value crops like potatoes and corn used in the rotation practices of wheat producers.

A study for the Oasis project proposed in the 2007 legislative session states that it takes approximately 460,000 dry land acres to produce the equivalent in crop value as 10,000 acres of irrigated land. This suggests that with water you need 46 times less land in order to generate the same dollar value from crops. The availability of water creates the ability to grow higher market value crops such as fruits and vegetables. These products would require processing in Oregon driving investments and jobs in cold storage and distribution facilities. Additionally, increasing the productive capacity of land will generate increases in state and local property taxes. In short, the addition of water to acreage in eastern Oregon will increase the tax base and create badly needed jobs in that region.

As an eastern Oregon farmer and president of the Oregon Wheat Growers League, I ask that you support HB 4101 and move it out of committee with a do pass recommendation. It will provide a needed asset to our region that will help to maintain the viability of our farms for years to come.