



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON

April 11, 2013

To: House Agriculture and Natural Resources
Representative Brad Witt, Chair
Members of the Committee

Re: HJR 25 Referral to Voters on Prohibition of Fees on Exempt Wells – OPPOSE

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government.

“The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the Oregon Constitution should be a basic framework of state government, free of obsolete material and statutory detail. It should guarantee basic democratic rights to the people of the state...”

HJR 25 prohibits a tax or fee on the construction, alteration, abandonment, conversion or operation of water wells. There are 200,000 to 350,000 home domestic wells that supply drinking water to Oregonians. And there will be more to come. There are also wells for agriculture and other economic uses.

This session we are asking our General Fund—Oregonian’s taxes—to pay for groundwater studies. We support that effort. New exempt well owners are asked to pay a \$300 fee and provide a map of the location of their new well. For many of those current wells, there is no information about their location nor did they pay any fee. The current fee will not provide the information needed by counties to help address local groundwater issues. This is about rural economic development as well as assuring that wells are properly installed or abandoned.

The issue of who pays for services and what fees should be charged belongs in statute or by rule of a state agency under the policy direction of the Legislature, not in the ballot box nor into the Constitution. We ask you to reject HJR 25.

Sincerely,

Robin Wisdom
President

Peggy Lynch
Natural Resources Coordinator