

**Testimony of Jerry Schmidt**  
**HJR-25**  
**Oregon Ground Water Association**  
**House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**  
**April 8, 2013**

**Start cards**

The Department is required by statute to collect and track fees collected prior to beginning the construction of a well. These well start card fees are limited (by statute) to costs associated with the construction and inspection of wells and a limited amount of related administrative expenses. The law (537.762) requires that the State Treasury shall create a fund to deposit monies that are collected from "start cards" identified as the Water Resources Department Operating Fund (537.763) and it shall be used for the expenses connected with the well construction program. The statute also prescribes that the following limits apply to this fund: administrative costs-not more than 5%; technical costs-not more than 20%; and field costs-not less than 75%.

The history of the start card dates back to 1989 when the Legislature established a fee to fund a state wide well inspection program and the original legislation also set limits to prohibit local governments from adopting ordinances to regulate well construction. The legislative record reflects the issue that water management was a state-wide issue. The language was also provided to protect well owners so they would not be subject to multiple levels of regulation and fees from different governmental entities. The fee at that time was set at \$75 dollars and was changed in 2003 to \$125 and then again in 2009 to \$225.

The start card fee has a history of supporting regional well inspectors, a lead well construction specialist, staff hydrogeologists, a data- entry employee, and a portion of the compliance section manager's salary. Some of the fees also have been used to pay for administrative support including equipment purchase.

Further modification was done to ORS 537.762 in 2009 with the introduction of HB-2232. Specifically this piece of legislation required those person constructing geotechnical holes to submit a report to the Water Resources Department within 30 days of drilling. This legislation also set in statute a recording fee of \$25 for each report and a \$10 fee for each subsequent hole. The fees were directed to a WRD Geotechnical Fund and required the department to spend the funds on the duties, functions and powers related to the construction of geotechnical holes. These holes are constructed to evaluate subsurface data including the testing of ground water and the soils for the presence of contaminates.

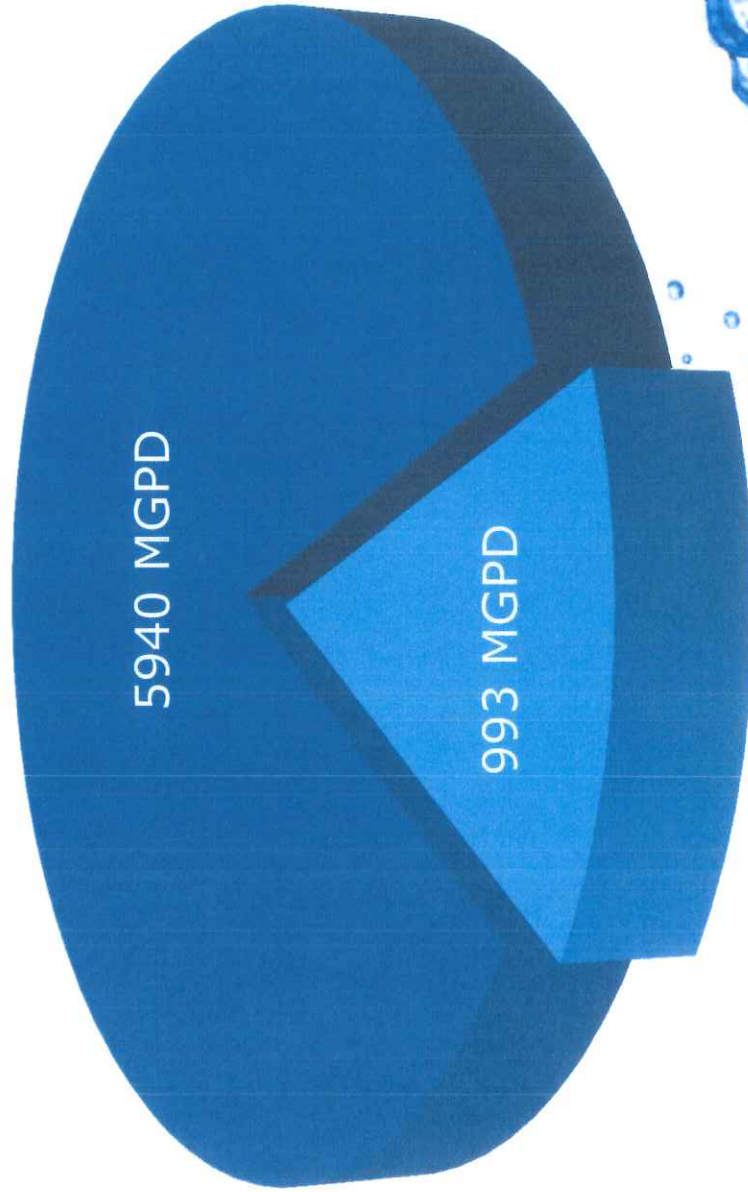
**Domestic Well recording fee**

In 2009 the Water Resources Department established an additional recording fee of \$300 in SB-788 on individual domestic wells that are exempt from the water right permit requirements. The legislative fiscal office described the new recording fee to be used to evaluate ground water supplies, conduct ground water studies, monitor ground water, and for further administration and enforcement of domestic well use.

This particular fee is particularly puzzling since individual domestic wells cause no significant threat to our water resources. They are by their nature a very insignificant use of the resource and have not caused or expanded aquifer depletions. The issue of long-term funding for ground water programs is very important but to single out the lowest user for additional fee support does not make sense.

# Total Water Use in Oregon

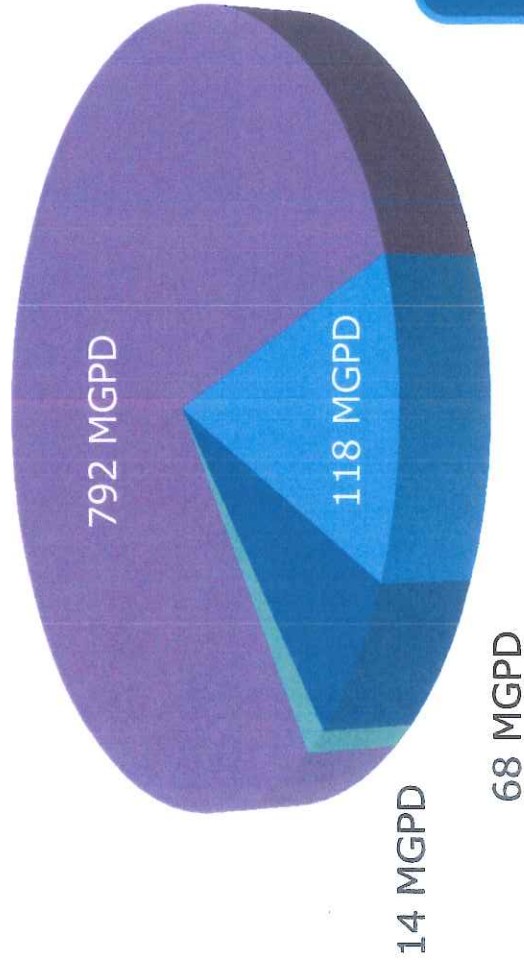
- Ground
- Surface



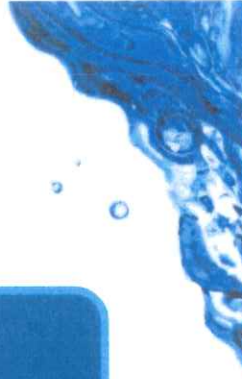
# Breakdown of Ground Water Users in Oregon

- Community Water Suppliers
- Individual Domestic
- Industrial & Thermal Electric
- Irrigation

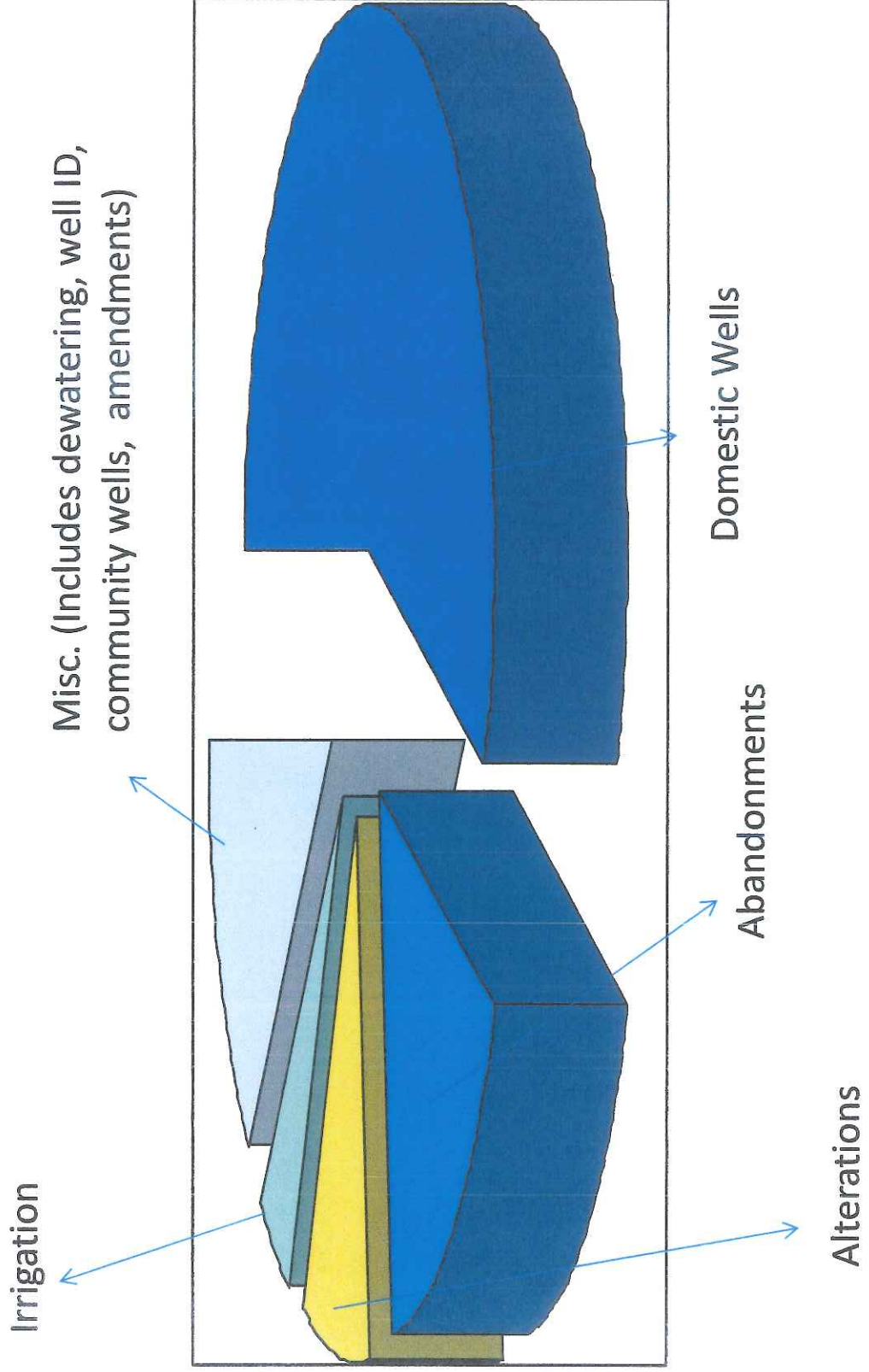
\*MGPD – Million Gallons Per Day



85% of Domestic Use is returned directly to the aquifer through the septic system--- Actual use 10 MGPD This represents 1% of total GW use



# Water Well Logs filed in Oregon for 2008



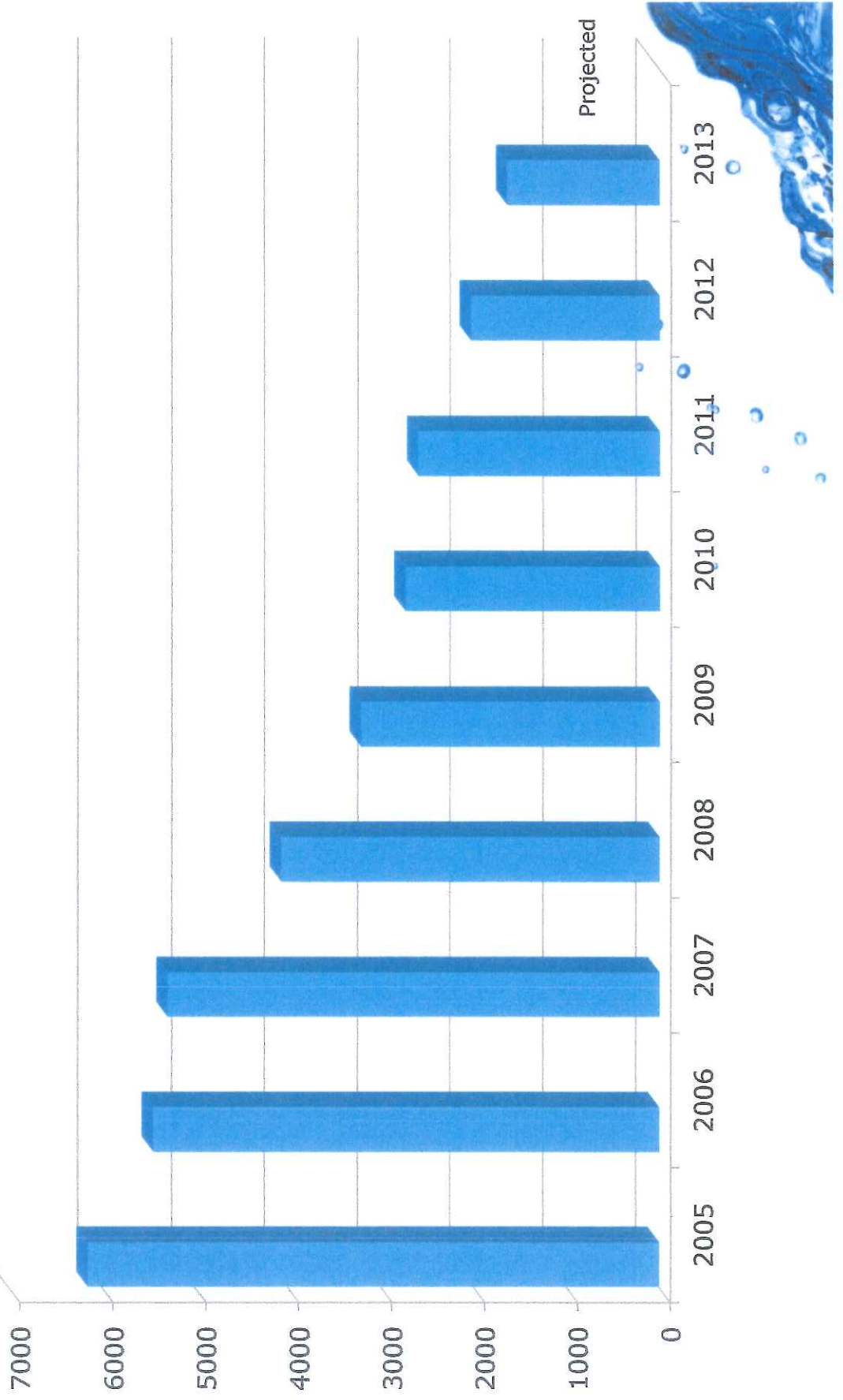
# Completed Water Well Reports

WRD Employees 138 FTE  
2005-7

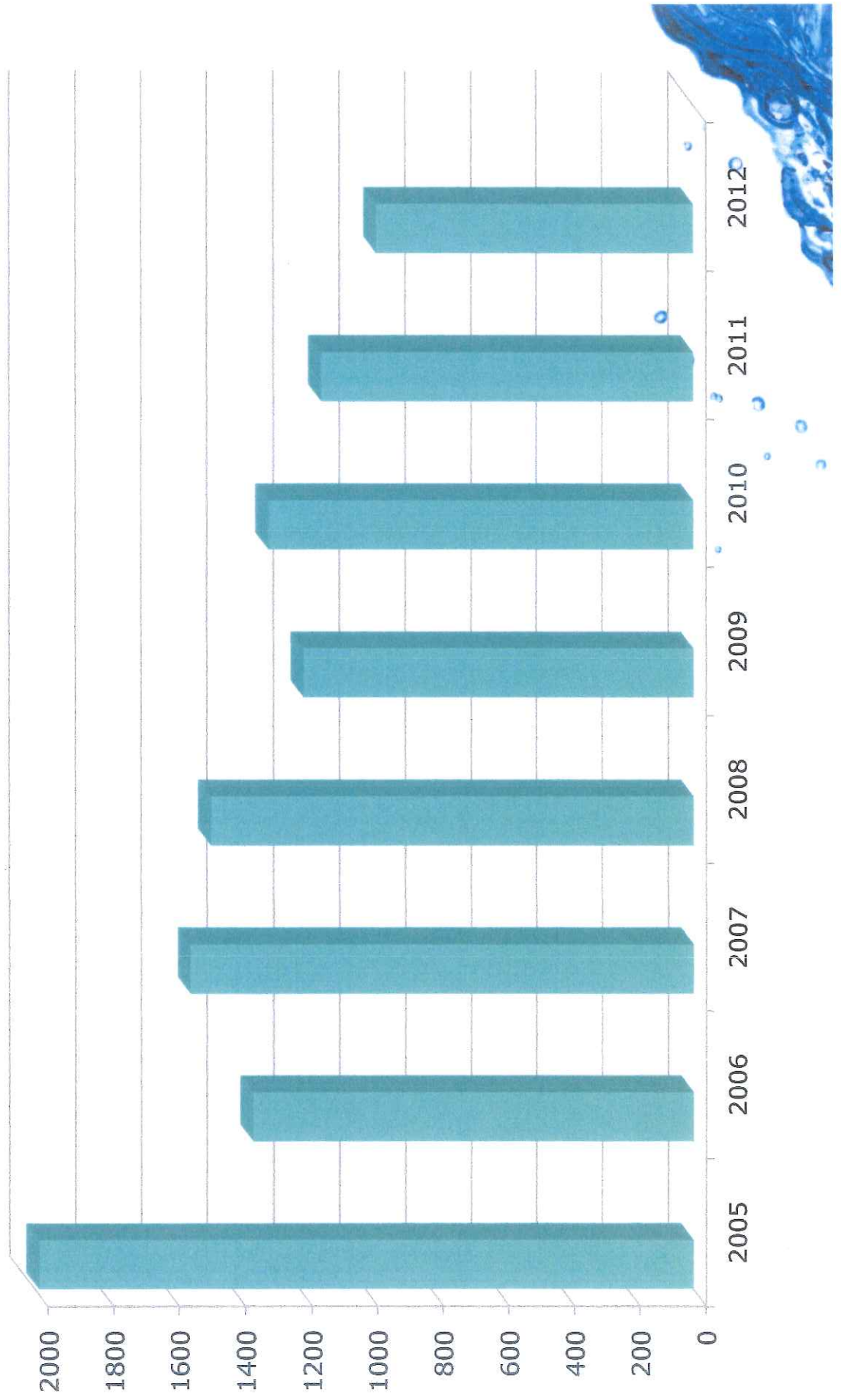
Gov. Budget \$29,498,041

159 FTE  
2013-15

\$65,971,911



# Completed Monitoring Well Reports



# Completed Geotechnical Hole Reports

