

Date: April 16, 2013

To: The Honorable Jackie Dingfelder, Chair

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Testimony By:

Keith P. Nantz

GM/Partner in Dillon Land and Cattle Co.

Co-Chairman – OCA Private Land Committee

Vice-Chairman – OCA Young Cattlemen’s Committee

President of North Central Livestock Association

Testimony on SB 217

Good afternoon Chair Dingfelder and members of the committee. My name is Keith Nantz, acting General Manager of Dillon Land and Cattle Co. in Maupin, OR. I am an active member of the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association as the Co-Chairman of the Private Lands Committee and as the Vice-Chairman of the Young Cattlemen’s Committee, and also serving as President of the newly formed North Central Livestock Association. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today on SB 217.

SB 217 imposes an annual management fee of \$100.00 per water right. As stated within this bill, Section 2, Subsection 2, I will be charged the maximum \$1000.00 allowable. This is in addition to the \$4940.00 in fees that I already pay for maintenance and management within my irrigation district. My operation is also very active in our Multiple Local Watershed councils helping to manage our water rights and make concerted efforts to make efficiency upgrades to help conserve more waters of the state.

I am 33 years old and have had a dream of owning and operating a farming/ranching operation since I was very young. Today the average age of farmers and ranchers is 57.1 years old according to the 2007 US census. The fastest growing age demographic within the farming arena are those 65 yrs old and older, growing by 22% in 2007. Unfortunately the fastest shrinking demographic are those 45 yrs old and younger, dropping by 14% in 2007. Each year we see less and less young people coming into farming and ranching, yet we see a rapid population growth causing less and less of our land to be available to produce our worlds food products.

In my humble opinion this is caused by several factors, but the main one is economics. Each day it gets harder and harder to stay viable economically in the face of tax increases, input costs, and additional fees to carry out redundant management. We have an incredibly important task in front of us in the next 50 years, feeding a world population twice as large as it is now. And with the challenges we face as young producers we don't see an opportunity to be prosperous, to create a positive economic impact, and a way to produce the needs of the world's people.

I personally have three employees, all of which have families and live in within our local rural community. By effectively operating a business in our area, I am impacting individual lives, our rural economy as well as our states. I strongly oppose a fee that will charge me for management that is already in place, a fee that will directly affect my overhead costs and take away from my bottom line, and a fee that will once again prohibit young producers from taking the challenge to be involved in production agriculture.

We as a state need a better economy, not more fees imposed upon us stifling our abilities to be proactive in creating jobs and a bright future for Oregon's Agriculture. I urge a no vote on this bill.

Sincerely,

Keith P. Nantz

Dillon Land and Cattle Co. - GM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith P. Nantz". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.