

Dear House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee; Brad Witt, Chairman

I hoped to be present at your hearing on the split season lease, Senate Bill 199, but will not be present. Via this communication I want to lend my support to its acceptance by the committee.

The original concept for the 'split season' lease was developed here on our small ranch in the Evans Valley of southern Oregon by the former Oregon Water Trust, now Freshwater Trust and we signed on for a one year trial period in 2001. Over the ensuing years it's been 'tweaked' here and there and has been of great value to the farm, Evans Creek and the community.

We've found that the winter and spring rains, sometimes supplemented with minimal irrigation in early summer months provides adequate moisture for our first cutting of hay. Light irrigations in late May and through June, shutting down the system and cutting in early July allows us to turn the water to the 'in stream lease' on July 1. We get sufficient hay for our winter needs and pasture the fields through the remainder of the summer/fall season.

As the 'banker' of this operation I've cut expenses considerably by diverting a portion of our water back to the creek and not going for a second or third cutting. Irrigation expenses by about 70% (labor, fuel and r&m on irrigation equipment) Fertilizer expenses are down by 50%; Tractor and hay equipment expenses are down because they sit in the barn.

Evans Creek has visually improved in its stream flow during that time of the year that it needs water for the fish and other wildlife and the community has been pleased with that improvement.

Let me mention also that we have pioneered the "Farms to Forest" program here on the ranch, bring together the Oregon Dept. of Forestry and the Freshwater trust where by water rights on 25 acres of marginal farm land were leased to the Trust for 29 years and the Oregon Forest Trust, managed by ODF, planted trees. All of that water now stays in the creek!

I see a great need for these innovative programs, especially among the small farmers/ranchers of our state. The programs are easy to implement by the agencies, easy to understand by the landowner and simple to monitor. I will encourage you to require the use of a flow meter for monitoring as well as for use by the landowner as a tool in applying the proper amount of water. In our third year under the program the Trust introduced me to one and I've found it to be of great value.

I encourage you to continue to make the 'split season lease' concept available.

Respectfully, Lawrence J. Martin P.O. Box 870 Rogue River, OR. 97537 LL 541-582-3620 Cell 541-660-1914