

Re: House Bill 4044 and 4064

2-9-14

Dear, House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to talk to you on Thursday morning. Since our time was very short I thought it important to send you my full testimony. Following is my written testimony to go along with the verbal testimony:

Good morning my name is David Oxley. I am a farmer and rancher in Klamath County, specifically our land is located in Poe Valley approximately 18 miles east of Klamath Falls. I have a 4 year education from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in Ag Engineering and Mechanized Ag. My wife and I purchased our 400 acre ranch over 20 years ago and we have raised two children here. My son after graduating from college has come back and now runs the ranch with us. He has purchased a 65 acre ranch near ours. Our primary water source from the state is delivered by the Klamath Irrigation District. We are patrons of Klamath Irrigation District and members of the Klamath Water Users Association. I am here today to let you know that we do not agree with Klamath Irrigation District or the Klamath Water Users Association and would urge you to support House bill 4044 and 4064.

In 2001 our primary surface water right from the state was taken from us. Because of this we felt it was very important to secure a secondary source for our state water right i.e. ground water. So to do this we spent approximately 800,000 dollars to develop 5 wells on our property. Subsequently I became an Oregon license well driller and drilled our wells as well as many others throughout the basin. I can tell you that the Klamath basin has very diversified geological structures within very short distances of each other. I hit water-bearing aquifers at many different depths in many different types of ground throughout the county. Some wells showed these same results with in as little as a quarter of a mile from each other. It seems very unreasonable and wrong to me that the Oregon Water Resources Department is using a study of a whole region to make such important decisions on our water wells.

After developing our wells we were told by Oregon Water Resources Department that we could not use our wells because of the "potential" interference with surface flows in the Lost River. They used this blanket type study information to make that determination on our wells. Without water they will take away our ability to make a living off our land. Needless to say, if we cannot make a living off the land then we cannot afford to keep our land or our home of 20 years.

This bill is not asking anyone to change any laws it is just asking for clarity and accountability by Oregon Water Resources Department. This is only reasonable when Oregon Water Resources Department is making decisions that affect our ability to make a living.

Shouldn't the Oregon Water Resources Department do everything possible to ensure they are making the best decisions possible? I feel this bill makes them do just that, so please support it. Thank you.

Sincerely, David Oxley

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