



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Water Resources Department

North Mall Office Building
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301-1266
503-986-0900
FAX 503-986-0904

Before the
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair

Testimony on House Bill 4045
“Reinstating Well Constructor Continuing Education”

February 18, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 4045, a bill that would reinstate the Well Constructor Continuing Education Program and the requirement that well constructors complete continuing education credits for license renewal.

Background

There are approximately 300,000 wells in Oregon, many of which supply water for drinking. Improper well construction or abandonment can lead to groundwater contamination and waste. Therefore, persons who construct, alter, convert or abandon a well are required to obtain a Well Constructor’s License to ensure that they have the necessary equipment, knowledge, and experience.

In 2001, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 579 establishing the Well Constructor Continuing Education Committee and Program, requiring well constructors to complete continuing education credits in order to renew licenses after June of 2005. In 2007, the Legislature extended the sunset on the program to January 2, 2014.

Continuing education courses are approved by the Well Constructor Continuing Education Committee, which is composed of well drillers and a member of the regulatory community. In order to satisfy the continuing education requirement to renew a license, the well constructor is required to provide proof of completion of 14 continuing education credits every two years. At least two continuing education credits must include courses pertaining to groundwater and well construction laws. Examples of other course topics include drilling, groundwater hydrology, well construction and abandonment, safety, first aide, CPR, and hazardous materials. Credits may be obtained through clinics, schools, professional organizations, seminars, or lectures. A broad selection of courses are also available online.

Proposal

Requiring well constructors to complete continuing education courses helps well constructors maintain and advance their skills in order to properly construct, alter, maintain, abandon, and convert wells, which helps to protect the groundwater resource and well-owners.

The proposed legislation would remove the January 2, 2014 sunset, reinstating the Well Constructor Continuing Education Committee and Program, including the requirement that well constructors complete continuing education credits for license renewal. This bill was approved by the Oregon House with a vote of 60-0-0.