

ROCK CREEK RANCH
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Representative Brad Witt
Chairman of the Agricultural Committee
900 Court Street NE H-374
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 4064 Strong Support

My name is Cameron Curtiss and I Own and operate Rock Creek Ranch, a cattle and timber ranch along the West side of Upper Klamath Lake. This ranch has been in by my family since 1964.

Here is what can happen if HB 4064 is not passed. In December of 2001 I applied for a well permit to drill two wells in the Denny Creek Basin above Upper Klamath Lake. The Water Resources Dept. issued a final order in 2002 granting the permit having found that the proposed wells did not measurably interfere with the surface water flows necessary to maintain the free flowing character of a scenic waterway in quantities necessary for recreation, fish and wildlife. The department also found that the proposed wells are not within a designated critical ground water area. Also no one contested the issuance of the above well water permit.

In 2003 the first well was constructed. In 2004 I participated in the Bureau of Reclamation ground water pumping program and did not use any surface water.

In the spring of 2013 the second well was drilled and constructed in the manner required by the Oregon Water Resources Department.

I was informed by the Water Resources Department in late 2013 that my new well was within 7/8 of a mile of Upper Klamath Lake and that might be a problem. I was informed that any well within 1 mile of a lake or stream could be regulated off.

So now I have 1 developed well and 1 partially completed well that I have invested over \$200,000.00 in that I may not be able to use. Now add another 200 wells from the upper Klamath basin that may be regulated off because they are deemed to interfere with senior surface water rights and the potential for severe economic hardship is evident in the entire upper Klamath Basin. Add Water Resources Dept. 1 mile policy state wide and you could see economic hardship everywhere throughout the state. Passage of HB 4064 would insure fair and equitable treatment of each well owner using verifiable science.

The WRD uses computer modeling to justify the 1 mile distance and they argue that their computer modeling is a proven method of analyzing the relationship between groundwater and surface water.

But I disagree, each well is unique and needs to be evaluated individually using sound and verifiable science and by having a qualified hydrologist provide information specific each individual well site.

Also HB 4064 would insure that the Water Resources Dept. must provide evidence that a restriction on a well will produce the desired effect for a senior water right holder. The Water Resources Dept. needs to be held accountable for its actions and this bill would help do just that.

This bill is vital to the fair and equitable treatment by the Water Resources Dept. of all well owners in the state. I respectfully urge your support of this bill.

Respectfully Yours,

Cameron Curtiss