

Raszka Shelley

From: Patrino Beth
Sent: Thursday, February 06, 2014 7:25 AM
To: Raszka Shelley
Subject: FW: House Bill 4044

From: Flying T Ranch [<mailto:cattle@flyingtsalers.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 05, 2014 8:28 PM
To: Patrino Beth
Subject: House Bill 4044

My name is Susan Topham and I am writing in support of House Bill 4044. I have lived my entire 25 years of life on my parent's cattle ranch in the Sprague River valley. Our ranch depends on having water to grow our hay crop and pasture for our cattle. With water our ranch is also a sanctuary for wildlife. Over 200 species of birds and other wildlife are located on our ranch along with our cattle. This past summer I got my first taste of how quickly that can change. After our surface water was shut off this past year, I was the one walking around in our dried up, decimated fields finding dead chicks and fish of all kinds of species that had naively assumed that their wetland would not dry up. I was the one that had to go out and check our cows as their pastures dried up and their feed withered. Often last summer, I could hardly see the cows when I went out to check on them because of all of the tears in my eyes. Tears not only for our cattle, but all of the wildlife, the scenery, and the land itself.

This summer, wells were all that saved us from being forced to sell all of our cows. Unfortunately, the wells which provide irrigation water and livestock drinking water in the Sprague River Valley are being threatened by a whim of the Oregon Water Resources Department. No hard science has been done to show that ground water wells are affecting creeks and rivers in our Valley. All that HB 4044 does is to make sure that if someone is put out of business by OWRD, that it only happens when there is actual interference. OWRD should support this. Right now, we are considered guilty until we can hire lawyers and prove that we are innocent. This is not the America that I am willing to believe in! You are the ones who will decide the fate of the Sprague River Valley. What you choose to do will significantly affect me. Eventually it will affect everyone else in this state as well. We are simply the testing grounds.

House Bill 4044 is absolutely vital to us. Please vote for it and stand up for real science and integrity in government!

Thank you,

Susan Topham

Flying T Ranch

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