



## Klamath County Commissioners

Tom Mallams, *Commissioner*  
Position One

Kelley Minty Morris, *Commissioner*  
Position Two

Jim Bellet, *Commissioner*  
Position Three

March 23, 2015

RE: Comments on SB 206, SB 264 & SB 265

Chairman Edwards and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposed Senate Bills.

I understand SB 265 may be pulled, but I feel it will resurface again and feel it appropriate to make a few comments. This Bill is a premature effort supporting the “Klamath Water Agreements”, which have not and very likely never will pass as Federal Legislation. These agreements require the State of Oregon to issue lottery bonds in the amount of \$3.4 million plus bond related costs. This Bill recognizes in Section 2,(1), the fact that the water agreements will have negative impacts in the Klamath Basin. Section 3,(2), of this Bill lists 4 uses of these funds one of which is to compensate Klamath County for loss of tax revenue as a result of the water agreements.

After related costs are taken out, \$3.2 million will be left which is to be paid over a 10 year period, which equals \$320,000.00 per year ending after year 10. This is a literal slap in the face to the citizens of Klamath County as the loss of tax revenue alone, on a **permanent** basis, adds up to \$1million per year.

S B 206 with its amendments would allow water transfers and leases in both the upper and lower basins. A part of the water agreements will be changing the purpose of Klamath Lake and the Reclamation Project to no longer only include irrigation but adding fish and wildlife at 50%. This will allow additional water allocations thru transfers and leases to be dedicated away from irrigated agriculture. The end result will be further devastation to the agricultural economy in the Klamath River Basin.

S B 264 further supports the Klamath Water Agreements which will result in an economic and environmental disaster of epic proportions. The citizens of the Klamath River Basin have shown time and time again their massive opposition to this current direction. Those that do support this direction have done so under great duress. Specifically, the irrigators that are in support are doing so because of what I call “legalized blackmail and extortion”.

We are privileged to have Senator and Representative Whitsett representing the Klamath Basin in these trying times. They continually base their decisions on detailed knowledge, common sense and a great amount of direct contact with their District’s constituents.

Do we need a settlement? **Absolutely!** The current “package deal” simply does not deliver what is required.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Tom Mallams*

