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**Testimony before the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
Senate Bill 206**

**Bryan Baumgartner  
President, Rogue River Valley Irrigation District  
March 23, 2015**

Chair Edwards, Vice-Chair Olsen, members of the Committee, my name is Bryan Baumgartner, and I serve as the President of the Rogue River Valley Irrigation District. In addition to serving as a board member, I also am an irrigator in the District. I am pleased to come before you today to offer my support for the dash-2 amendments to Senate Bill 206.

I am here representing the landowners in the Rogue River Valley Irrigation District, Medford Irrigation District, and Talent Irrigation District (the "Rogue Valley Districts"). Together, the Rogue Valley Districts supply water to over 35,000 irrigated acres, as well as to industrial and municipal users stretching from Ashland to Central Point.

Background on District Use of Klamath Basin Water

Since the late 1800s, to meet these significant water needs, the Rogue Valley Districts have depended on access to water stored high in the Klamath Basin. That water is stored in Fourmile Reservoir and then conveyed to the Rogue Basin via a trans-basin canal. Upon delivery to the Rogue Basin, the water is used to supply irrigation, municipal, and industrial water users in the basin. It also helps provide critical streamflow for threatened Coho salmon and other aquatic species.

Our interest in SB 206 is based on this century-old tie between the basins, and the potential impact the bill could have on the future use of our Klamath Basin water rights.

Support for the Amended Bill

With that background, I am here to offer our support of the dash-2 amendments to Senate Bill 206. The initial version of the bill raised several concerns about whether it would be protective of our certificated Klamath Basin water rights. However, after significant consultation with the Water Resources Department and discussions with the Klamath Project Water Users, we believe the Department has developed a set of amendments we can support. Critical to our support are the provisions in the dash-2 amendments that will protect existing water rights against injury and enlargement. It is also important to note that our support is based on the fact that Senate Bill 206 authorizes temporary transfers in place of use or point of diversion, and temporary instream leases, but it does not authorize a change in the character of use.

Conclusion

Water rights issues are unpredictable and challenging. We cannot know for certain how water rights will be administered in the Klamath Basin in coming years. However, we believe it is important that our fellow irrigators in the Klamath Basin have as many tools in their bag as possible to manage water in a sensible and efficient manner. It is our hope that Senate Bill 206 will provide such a tool. For that reason, we offer our support for the dash-2 amendments to Senate Bill 206.