

SB 206A

House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water

Written Testimony of Greg Addington
On behalf of the
Klamath Water Users Association

Chair Clem, Vice-Chairs Helm and Post and members of the Committee, my name is Greg Addington and I am the Executive Director of the Klamath Water Users Association (KWUA), located in Klamath Falls, Oregon. **I am providing this testimony in support of SB 206A.** SB 206A would provide useful tools for the management of water rights that have been recognized in the ongoing Klamath Basin water rights adjudication. We have long advocated that all irrigators, particularly in dry years, should have as many options and as much flexibility as possible in the exercise of their water rights. SB 206A provides this flexibility by allowing temporary transfers and leases of water for all irrigators in the Klamath Basin.

KWUA Background

KWUA is a non-profit corporation that has represented Klamath Reclamation Project farmers and ranchers since 1953. Our members are irrigators and irrigation districts who contract with the federal Bureau of Reclamation to supply water for their family farming operations. KWUA members include rural and suburban irrigation districts and other public agencies (drainage districts, improvement districts, etc.) as well as private individuals who operate on both sides of the Oregon/California border. Our membership represents over 1200 family farms and ranches and encompasses nearly 170,000 acres of very productive farmland.

The individuals and lands represented by KWUA have been at the very heart of some of the most difficult water conflicts the modern West has seen. That said, our organization has been a leader in the agricultural community in searching for a better way to do things. We have worked the better part of the last decade to forge relationships and develop water sharing agreements with former adversaries. In 2010, we were one of over 40 parties who signed the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement and Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement and committed to a different way of doing business in the Klamath Basin. We have worked and are working closely with the current and past Governor's offices to accommodate needed changes and support necessary state and federal legislation required to make these important water settlements a reality.

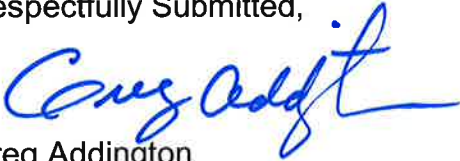
Need for the Legislation

As you know, the Klamath Basin is in the midst of a long-running, surface water adjudication process to determine previously un-adjudicated rights of the Klamath River system. Elsewhere in the state, a water user with a decreed water right has the flexibility to temporarily transfer or lease all or a portion of their water right to manage the ever increasing limitations on the supply caused by ongoing drought and regulatory requirements. Current law requires a decreed, certificated, or permitted water right to access the temporary water transfer and lease tools. In the Klamath basin, the Department of Water Resources has filed its Findings of Fact and Order of Determination in the Circuit Court, but we are years from completion of the court review and entry of a Decree and issuance of water right certificates. In the meantime, we need the water management tools available to other water users in this State to efficiently and effectively manage the available water supply. SB 206A seeks to temporarily change existing law to allow all irrigators in the Klamath Basin to use these important tools with their water rights that have been preliminarily determined under the Klamath Basin Adjudication.

When this legislation was heard in committee by the Senate, KWUA sought amendments to clarify and simplify the legislation. We are very pleased with the work done in the Senate and believe the bill is clean and should be passed as is.

I am available at your convenience to discuss further any concerns or questions the committee may have related to our testimony or position on this bill. **Please support SB 206A.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Greg Addington
Executive Director