

COMMENTS OPPOSING HB 2706

This bill is no emergency.

The work that it is supposed to pay for is redundant. It is already being done by the US Geological Survey and local watermasters.

In effect, you are suggesting that a new tax, or "fee" as you call it be imposed on water users to pay for administering the new tax.

It also makes absolutely no sense for a state agency to be expanded to collect money from local municipalities. These local municipalities are already having budget issues. In La Grande, citizens pay approximately \$80 per month for water. The city is trying to figure out how to add new water resources while maintaining the existing infrastructure. You are proposing that funding that is sorely needed at the local level to keep the water flowing should be sent to Salem in order to administer and fund a redundant department.

In addition, most water rights in our part of the state are held by agricultural users. Farmers and ranchers already have a hard enough time providing food for the people due to the rules, regulations and fees they are having to deal with. There is no need for expanding this agency on the backs of the states agricultural community.

I encourage you to vote not to forward HB 2706 out of committee.

Sincerely,

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