

Testimony of Jerry Schmidt

HB-2706

Government Relations

Oregon Ground Water Association

Before the House Committee on Energy and Environment

March 22, 2017

Position

Chair Helm and committee members, for the record my comments are prepared to address the concerns of the Oregon Ground Water Association regarding HB-2706. The industry **does not** support HB-2706, because we believe that it is not appropriate for a particular segment of water user to bear the costs of water management when all the people of Oregon benefit from the proper management of the state's water resources. In setting up the Water Resources Administration, the Legislature adopted policy statements that recognized that maintenance of a proper administration of our water resources was fundamental in the economic and general welfare of the state.

History

There has been many bills introduced in previous years that have sought to fund the Water Resources Department by establishment of an annual fee on certain segments of water users. The problem these bills all shared in common was the lack of fairness. Many segments of our society share in the assets of our water resources. Do the swimmers in our lakes and rivers pay a use fee? Do the people enjoying our rivers and streams (fisherman, boaters, hikers, etc.) pay a use fee? Do the people enjoying the scenic river designations of certain water bodies pay a use fee?

Conclusion

Since the water is designated to belong to the state then all persons benefit from the protection and management of our state's water resources. The only way our industry can justify funding of the management activities of the Water Resources Department is through the General Fund where the people in our state all participate and share the responsibility of proper water management. For those reasons **our industry opposes this bill.**