

# Holliday Land & Livestock, Inc.

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March 21, 2017

RE: House Bills 2705 and 2706

Dear Energy and Environmental Committee Member:

My name is Ken Holliday, I am a lifelong cattle rancher located in Grant County, Oregon. My agricultural operation depends on fully adjudicated water rights from the John Day River and several tributaries as well as the Silvies River and tributaries. Several of my water rights have priority dates that go back to 1864. The key to my comments is the term "water right". Being fully adjudicated, I believe the water rights attached to my property are a legal property right.

Oregon's agricultural industry is its second largest economic driver, providing vast habitats necessary to support healthy fish and wildlife populations, along with enhancing other renewable natural resources and is the cornerstone that sustains rural economies. The installation of measuring devices in HB 2705 will cost tens of thousands of dollars with the cost of maintenance adding thousands in labor costs. The reporting requirements will again increase labor and out-of-pocket expenses.

The "management fees" imposed by HB 2706 on each water right certificate, permit, decree, or groundwater registrations is in reality a tax with no additional service being received. Many ranches in our area have numerous water rights and points of diversions. The proposed "management fee" will impose financial costs that have the potential to severely impact these agricultural operations. The cost of HB 2705 and 2706 will be difficult for the very volatile agricultural industry to bear. The above issues are especially concerning as Oregon Water Resources reported in 2015 that water compliance among users was at 98%.

Several of my irrigation ditches have Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife fish passage screens. The operation and maintenance of the screens requires a working cooperative relationship between Oregon Water Resources, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the landowner. I am concerned the HB 2705 could negatively affect this current positive working relationship, which has taken years to develop.

In closing I would like to state I am opposed to HB 2705 and 2706. I believe adjudicated water rights are a basic property right and am adamantly opposed to any infringement of those property rights by the Oregon Legislature.

Sincerely,  
Ken Holliday