



County Court of Grant County
Judge Scott W. Myers
Commissioner Jim Hamsher
Commissioner Boyd Britton

March 22, 2017

Sent via email to: hee.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov; rep.cliffbentz@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: Grant County's response to HB 2705 and HB 2706

Chair Helm and House Energy and Environment Committee Members:

The Grant County Court would like to inform the Committee about our concerns with the proposed legislation in HB 2705 and HB 2706. We are extremely concerned there is great possibility, if enacted; these bills could implement the laws of unintended consequences, such as, alienating the working relationship between Water Resources, ODFW, the Tribes and our landowners. These bills would also increase the fiscal burden on all parties involved. An example of this would be the additional employees necessary to monitor these devices and manage and administer fines and administrative actions. It has the potential of bankrupting many of our landowners.

Oregon Water Resource data compiled in 2014 reported they had a 98% compliance rate for water usage. There is not an abuse of water volume usage taking place in our county. We are self-regulated by the adjudicated water rights of the junior water right holders. In particular HB 2706 is not a fee as described, rather it is actually a tax, because a fee can only be appropriated when a service is rendered. In the current language of the legislation there is no reference to any additional services being delivered to the user.

The Grant County Court stands ready to testify with our concerns and our potential solutions to a problem that we feel does not exist. Please remember that many of the senior water rights and diversions were adjudicated within 10 years of statehood. We oppose any infringement upon these water rights and basic property rights as they would have a devastating effect on the sustainability of our economy.

Please feel free to contact any one of us for clarification of our position.

Respectfully,

Jim Hamsher
County Commissioner

Boyd Britton
County Commissioner