



February 8, 2018

RE: Opposition to HB 4016 -1

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to voice opposition to HB 4016 with the -1 amendment. The Oregon Conservation Network appreciates the work that has been done to refine this bill, but unfortunately we have significant remaining concerns.

We continually hear that this bill would authorize transfer of 5,000 acre feet - but, that's only for the Klamath Irrigation District. The amount of water in total, considering that this bill applies to all 14 districts in the basin, is unknown at this point. With the -1 amendments, this bill opens up the potential for all unused water rights in the Klamath Basin will be revived this year, despite the potential for this year's drought season to be catastrophic. Taking into account that water is scarce and highly sought after in the basin, allowing transfer of an unknown quantity of water in with severe drought looming is unwise.

HB 4016 does not require that the Klamath Basin irrigators who hold determined claims to provide proof of use as part of a water right transfer. This could result in long unused water claims being revived. In a basin where every drop matters, and given the likelihood of drought in the Klamath Basin this year, a narrow bill that only benefits one set of users at the expense of all other interests in the basin—including National Wildlife Refuges, Tribes, commercial fishing families, off project farming families and endangered species is not fair, nor good public policy.

Sincerely,

Paige Spence
Oregon Conservation Director