



February 8, 2018

RE: Opposition to HB 4016

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members:

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

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.

I understand there is an amendment in the works that very clearly states that the Water Resources Department will not require proof of use in the first year, but in the second year, they will. Giving the irrigators a pass in year one means they will be able to “prove use” for the next five years. Thus, our concerns remain.

Sincerely,

Paige Spence
Oregon Conservation Director
Oregon League of Conservation Voters