



DEQ Budget Testimony (HB 5017)

Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

February 21, 2019

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the budget for the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). DEQ has several programs that deeply impact our membership, so we have a vested interest in DEQ's budget for key program areas.

Given DEQ's large breadth of program areas, we understand how difficult it is for the agency, the governor's office and the legislature to assess relative priorities between DEQ's programs. However, we believe in at least on POP, DEQ has requested resources that are better utilized in another agency's program. DEQ has requested \$604,412 under POP 126 for three positions in the Klamath to support their efforts "to scale up water quality improvement projects in the basin, as part of a program to provide for sustainable fisheries and agriculture in the region." Having attended the recent EQC meeting in the Klamath Basin in September, we are aware that the water quality issues DEQ has been focusing on the last year are agricultural. However, ODA's related POP (#330 in ODA's budget) only asked for \$100,000 for this work. We are concerned that DEQ's request is over six times that of ODA, and that DEQ intends to take on work that is more appropriately within ODA's agricultural water quality program.

In his testimony, Director Whitman indicated that the resources would go toward updating five out of date point source permits in the basin. However, this work should be completed as part of POP 127, where DEQ is requesting \$2.9 million to update out of date permits. We believe that the resources to address agricultural water quality in the Klamath Basin should go to ODA, not DEQ.

Finally, we request that the legislature maintain close oversight over DEQ's use of its resources. Over the past year, we have noticed several instances where DEQ is not coordinating closely with sister agencies who are working on similar programs, resulting in takeover of core duties and duplication of activities. DEQ should coordinate with sister agencies to avoid taking over functions already provided by other agencies, reduce duplication of resources and ensure that its resources are being devoted to the highest priority issues.

Thank you for your consideration.

Oregon Farm Bureau

Contact: Mary Anne Cooper, maryanne@oregonfb.org