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Chair Helm and the Committee:

I attended the hearing on March 12 on this bill, but had to leave at 2:30 because of my parking meter, and I don't know if my name was called for testimony.

I was at the hearing with a colleague, representing a grass roots organization in Yamhill County called CAPOW (Community Advocates Protecting Our Water).

Our organization strongly supports this legislation. We believe that there are so many things that affect our water quality and water supply, that we absolutely must take the actions that are within our power to protect our waters, because, especially with climate change, there are so many things that we aren't able to control any more.

My colleague who attended the hearing with me has been personally affected. She lives in rural Yamhill County, and this past summer the adjacent property was clear cut, and in the fall, for the first time in 25 years of existence, her well nearly went dry, and would have without the severe conservation measures they took.

Of course I believe people should be free to make a living off their property, but when it crosses the line and affects the quality of life and pursuit of happiness of any other person, then they should not be allowed to engage in that activity.

I believe we are a pathetic species if we can't manage to provide for ourselves without fouling our nest to the point where it is unlivable, and it makes me sick to think that we are almost to that point. It is unconscionable that this country has allowed the few to become extremely wealthy by exploiting and profiting from the resources that we should all be managing and preserving for future generations. I was struck by much of the testimony opposed to this bill - the speakers seemed to be big industry people pretending to be small landholders, and their arguments are selfish and do not take into consideration their fellow human beings.

For too many years, economic considerations have taken precedence over environmental concerns, and now we are in the big mess that we find ourselves in, with a growing disparity between the extremely wealthy and everyone else, and many people on the planet finding themselves in dire straights. This was not sustainable 50 years ago, and is now at a critical point. Without our environment, we have no economy, and we're all toast.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and please support this bill to passage.

Sincerely,

Joni Zimmerman
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