

Watts Remy

From: Flying T Ranch <cattle@flyingtsalers.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2019 4:03 PM
To: SENR Exhibits
Subject: Senate Bill 791.

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Dear Committee Members

I urge you to support Senate Bill 791.

The geology in the Upper Klamath Basin is unique and very complex. OWRD modeling does not work in these circumstances. Each well is different and must be looked at on an individual basis if it is to be shut off. OWRD has been making political decisions, not decisions based on real science. The ramifications of their political decisions are destroying my families lives and livelihoods as well as that of my neighbors.

My name is Virginia Topham and I raise cattle in the Sprague River Valley. My husband and I bought your ranch 47 years ago. We didn't have a sugar daddy, we built what we have with strong backs and our own hands.

We have spent decades developing a premium herd of Salers cattle. We sell our breeding stock all over the west and into the Midwest and Canada. Our natural, grass-fed, free range beef is marketed all over the west as well. We've worked hard to be competitive and provide our customers with healthy, sustainable products year after year. We use solar energy. We irrigate efficiently. We rotate grazing, We nurture the land and all that lives upon it.

Our customers appreciate the fact that we are not a corporation, we're a family. They buy our livestock and our beef because they can see how much we love the land and our cattle. We protect the ranch and do everything we can to make it as prosperous as possible. It's good business, and it's good for the land both for now and for the future--these go hand in hand.

We love this valley. This is where we put down our roots. We lost our first son here and his ashes are scattered over the land. Our remaining children, ages 30 and 32, want to continue this life we started. My daughter and I would be at this hearing today but we are in the midst of calving season.

Six years ago, when all our surface water was shut off by OWRD and the Klamath Tribe, feed became scarce. In some fields, mere drinking water was denied to livestock and what little grass was left got burnt by the sun and wasted. We were forced to reduce our reputation herd by a third. That's a huge loss to us. Our only salvation from losing the ranch that we took over 47 years to build was the irrigation well we drilled 33 years ago. That was the only thing that kept us going.

This land has been irrigated for 150 years. The soil types and grass species are reliant on summer irrigation. We got a preview during the last six years of burned up vegetation and air pollution from blowing dust. Once the rest of the irrigation is jerked from the land, this beautiful valley will become a desolate wasteland. Our valley is home to hundred of thousands of birds and wildlife in the summer. What are they going to do if these irrigated wetlands suddenly vanish? How many thousands of birds and wild animal

will lose their habitats?

Senate Bill 791 is vital to us. OWRD shut off our well last summer. One hundred plus wells were shut off in the Upper Klamath Basin just because they were within one mile of surface water. We must have OWRD look at our wells on an individual basis to determine if it affects surface water. We are a family ranch. What you decide today will determine my future, and my family's future. Our lives and careers are in your hands. So, what do I tell my children? What is your answer? They deserve the opportunity to carry on the family tradition. Do you agree? Will you give them that chance?

Ivan Gall, a OWRD geologist, says their science cannot be questioned. I thought America was built on the principle that "one is innocent until proven guilty" OWRD says groundwater and surface water are hydraulically connected. Their computer modeling in no way resembles the real world. Apparently the State of Oregon says "we are guilty until we prove we are innocent." We cannot prove a negative.

Please support Senate Bill 791. OWRD must be required to make decisions based on real science and examine each well on an individual basis.

Thank you.

Virginia Topham

35133 Sprague River Road

Sprague River, OSR 97639



Virus-free. www.avast.com