

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Beyer, Rep. Fahey and Esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing in support of the Drought Relief Package.

You are likely well aware of the ongoing water woes of the Klamath Basin, but this summer, an already difficult situation became dire after hundreds of domestic wells ran dry. Not only were our agricultural producers unable to use water, but alongside them hundreds of friends and neighbors wells failed. Having citizens call and share their experience, some of them attempting to turn on a faucet as early as May, without success, is unacceptable. We are incredibly grateful for the assistance of Oregon Emergency Management, ODDS, OWRD, The Governor's office, and others who helped stand up an emergency response effort, starting in July and continuing to this day, to help provide 500 gallon water tanks and water delivery to help fulfill basic household needs like drinking water, laundry, showers and flushing toilets. This emergency response is not sustainable for the long term, and yet wells still have not recovered. This issue needs your help, quickly.

For the last several months, I've worked with the Governor's Office, the Farm Bureau, Klamath Water Users Association and other stakeholders to put together a package to address this critical need. This package is vital for Klamath County. If hundreds of households in downtown Portland were without basic drinking water, I can only imagine the outrage. Please understand we feel that outrage too, and we are trying to address it. Please work with us to support rural Oregon on this most basic human need.

Respectfully,

Commissioner Kelley Minty Morris
Klamath County Board Chair