

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for considering a drought relief package during your special session. The impacts of the 2021 drought were devastating for portions of the Deschutes River Basin and for my County. The package of relief measures you are considering can help greatly.

We have received reports from dozens of rural Deschutes County homeowners that their domestic wells went or were going dry in 2021. Needing to pay for a new deeper well is a financial strain that many families and households are unable to absorb. So after hearing these reports of wells going dry and reading an August 2021 OWRD technical memo outlining modest but steady declines in groundwater levels in the Deschutes Basin in recent decades I am very worried for my community.

Your drought relief package includes a \$5.75 million Statewide Domestic and Community Wells Assistance component. Assistance for Deschutes County within this component will help to keep struggling families in their homes. With the \$585,200 focused on Deschutes County, we will be able to work with community partners to assist needy homeowners to remediate substandard wells and adjust for anticipated future groundwater levels in a changing climate.

I urge you to approve the Drought Relief package, including domestic well assistance for Deschutes County. The assistance for farmers in the Deschutes Basin would also be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information on the drought and groundwater situation in Deschutes County.

Thank you.

Phil Chang
Deschutes County Commissioner
541-388-6569