



West Extension Irrigation District

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April 23, 2021

To: Chair Ken Helm, Vice-Chair Mark Owens, Vice-Chair Jeff Reardon, and Members of the House Water Committee

Re: SB 130 Extension of District Temporary Transfer Program; Floor letter in Support

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair Reardon, and Members of the Committee:

West Extension Irrigation District is providing this letter of support for SB 130, which will extend the pilot program for irrigation district temporary transfers. This program is beneficial and a part of a best practice management program for many irrigation districts in Oregon, including ours.

The West Extension Irrigation District serve 10,400 irrigated acres in Northeast Oregon as part of the federal Umatilla Basin project. We have over 1000 patrons ranging from small, urban folks to growers with hundreds of irrigated acres. The program is used by patrons of all sizes in our District.

There are many reasons our folks participate in the temporary transfer program, including:

- Provides our patrons with flexibility needed to meet water needs within district. In addition to farmers wanting to move the rights around on their own properties, we have 20-25 folks each year that, for various reasons, will not use a portion of their water.
- More timely access for patrons to have available water for each irrigation season
- Minimal paperwork for simple “on” and “off” transfers helps reduce regulatory burden.
- Reduced expense to district and patrons from unnecessary application fees as the transfer can be prepared “in house”.
- Provides beneficial use and protects water rights from non-use. We see this as folks get older or a property is in transition. Owners want to protect their water rights, but are not able to use them for various reasons, some of which is age-related. We have developed this program to allow such folks to protect the water right on their property, maintaining its value, and allow their water to be used by other irrigators who will put the water to beneficial use. This is a “win-win” situation and those folks participating are dedicated to the program.
- Optimizes limited water supplies for use by farmers and ranchers, increasing economic production and stabilizing the local agricultural economy.

We are pleased to be part of the district temporary transfer pilot program. It has the full support of our District and we urge you to pass SB 130. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beverly J. Bridgewater". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Beverly J. Bridgewater, District Manager