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Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Oregon Cattlemen's Association ("OCA"). OCA represents ranchers across the state of Oregon and works to promote environmentally and socially sound cattle industry practices. Water is a critical and precious resource for sustaining animal life and producing food and valuable byproducts for the State and the world. It is important to OCA and its members that the State manage water resources by priority in a scientifically sound manner.

Over the last decade, we have seen the State use various regional models and change applicable regulations multiple times in an attempt to regulate groundwater users over vast areas who each impact water resources differently. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to groundwater regulation, which is why it is so important to rely on verifiable science for site-specific circumstances. OCA supports Senate Bill 710 because the bill seeks to set standards for guiding the State in this important endeavor.

OCA has several suggestions to help improve Senate Bill 710:

- Section 1, Subsection (2): Revise the text to ensure the equations, techniques, or modeling referenced in the bill utilize site-specific data for the particular wells being regulated and do not rely on regional information that is not appropriate for regulating particular wells;
- Section 1, Subsection (3): Remove this section because whether "substantial evidence" exists is question of law and fact that must be determined by a court under the Administrative Procedures Act;
- Section 2, Subsection (9): Revise the language "at the discretion of the commission." Instead, consider stating that nothing in the statute precludes the Commission or Department from seeking voluntary joint action with water users whenever possible; and
- Section 3, Subsection 1(b)(B): This subsection states the Department may deny a permit after a hearing, however, a hearing is only necessary if requested by a protestant, so we recommend revision this provision.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association thanks the Committee for its consideration of this important bill and ways to improve Oregon's management of groundwater. We ask that the Committee vote to pass the bill after considering some minor revisions for improvement.

Sincerely,

Sarah Liljefelt
Water Resources Committee Chair
Oregon Cattlemen's Association

~ Voice of the Oregon Cattle Industry Since 1913 ~