



284 E Water St, Stayton, OR

**To:** Chair Ken Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens, Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

**RE:** House Bill (HB) 3187,

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

HB 3187 changes the eligibility for individuals seeking to take the Certified Water Rights Examiner (CWRE) license exam and will allow district staff with extensive experience to sit for the exam. There are currently only 216 CWRE's in the state and over 30% of those are within the expanded Portland metro area. The number available is insufficient to process the needed, much less future, workload. There are no arguments to the contrary.

Currently, the CWRE exam is limited to registered geologists, professional engineers, and land surveyors, although those professions have little to do with the business of water rights. This bill does not change, lessen, or eliminate any exam requirements, any CWRE licensing requirements, or any aspect of the Oregon State Board of Examiners for Engineering and Land Surveying (OSBEELS) purview, including continuing education and revocation authorities, nor does it lessen any review, analysis, or oversight process of the Oregon Water Resources Dept (OWRD). The CWRE exam itself is used to establish and answer the question of whether an individual has the knowledge and skills required to perform the actions authorized under the license. We are just asking that education and professional class not be used as a barrier to qualify an individual to take that exam.

The 2022 CWRE training workshop given by our state water resources dept demonstrates knowledge helpful to CWRE's such as "How to select, install and read a flow meter" - "How to report water use online" - "WRD atlas of water rights by type and use" - "Pump test overview". The duties of a district employee responsible to measure water, report that water use to OWRD, create maps depicting use and transfer of water rights all at the same professional level and technical ability of a well-seasoned CWRE should meet the qualification to sit for an exam to measure and test those skills.

HB 3187 simply expands the pool of professional candidates who can take the exam. You are likely to hear protectionist arguments that district personnel lack some level of professionalism, that seven years isn't easily verified or defined, that the holding of a background license provides some ethical value not attainable but for higher education. Those values should not be used solely to measure one's ability to sit for a competency and licensing exam. District Employees are entrusted public servants, subject to Oregon government ethics commission oversight, and we are responsible for providing water to one third of the irrigated acres in Oregon.

HB 3187 is needed to fill a void in available and affordable CWRE's. Without an ample amount of CWRE's, Oregon's water community will be unable to access available legal mechanisms to responsibly manage water.

**Please support HB 3187 and help Oregon meet its licensed professional Certified Water Right Examiner's needs.**

Thank you for your consideration.

*Brent Stevenson*

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Brent Stevenson, District Manager Santiam Water Control District