

Submitter: Tony Svejcar

On Behalf Of: High Desert Partnership

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure: HB3222

Testimony from Dr. Tony Svejcar, Hines OR regarding HB 3222. 2-22-23

I've been a resident of Harney County for 32 years and for 25 of those years I directed federal research programs at the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center. The work involved a suite of agricultural and ecological research, some of which focused on flood meadows. With our mix of federal and private wetlands, the research required interacting with a wide array of stakeholders, many of whom participate in the Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative (HBWC). My role in HBWC has been to work with partners to assemble existing science on flood meadow management and to host workshops with flood meadow managers. We share the science and ask managers about trends they have seen over time, practices they apply, and how and when they make decisions on water management in particular. We have summarized streamflow in the Basin for the past 100 years. The next steps are to discuss how water can be used more efficiently (since less is likely) and ask what kind of information is needed to inform decisions. The Harney Basin has always been a highly variable environment over time, and predictions suggest that will only increase in the future. Climate adaptation coupled with open discussion provides the best chance for maintaining our important wetland values into the future, and HB 3222 will help take us in that direction.