

Submitter: Susan Fairclo House

On Behalf  
Of:

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

Measure: HB2765

Susan Fairclo House  
15555 Highway 140 East  
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603

Testimony in support of: House Bill 2765: Relating to treated wastewater discharged  
by the  
South Suburban Sanitary District; declaring an emergency.

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

Dear Chair Helm Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens and members of the committee,

My name is Susan Fairclo House. I am 67 years old and I am the fifth generation of  
an agricultural family of the Klamath Basin.

South Suburban Sanitary District proposes legislation to maximize the environmental  
and other public  
benefits of its existing treated wastewater discharges into Lake Ewauna. The District  
is an Oregon special  
district responsible for treating municipal and industrial wastewater in the Klamath  
Falls area. Currently, the District discharges its treated wastewater directly into Lake  
Ewauna—a reservoir that forms the headwaters of the Klamath River—pursuant to a  
permit issued by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. The District's  
wastewater discharges contribute new, clean water to the Klamath River that would  
not otherwise reach the river without the District's efforts. The District is an important  
contributor to stream flows in a water-starved area, with benefits to water quality and  
protected species.

The District is facing expensive upgrades to its treatment system in order to comply  
with new  
wastewater discharge permitting requirements. Given the necessary investment of  
public dollars to make those upgrades, the District would like to ensure that its  
discharge method continues to maximize environmental and other public benefits  
going forward. As one example, the District would like the option to use the Klamath  
River as a natural conveyance system to direct treated wastewater to enhance  
stream flows in the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge during certain times of

the year and to downstream water users in need of additional supplies during other times of the year. Unfortunately, the District's discharge options are currently limited by existing Oregon law. Under existing law, the District does not clearly maintain legal control of its treated wastewater once it is discharged into Lake Ewauna. Therefore, the District does not clearly have a legal right to ensure that its wastewater can be reused to benefit fish and wildlife habitat or downstream water users once it is discharged into the Klamath River.

Alternatively, with a narrow legislative fix, the District could continue discharging its treated wastewater into Lake Ewauna and use the Klamath River as a natural conveyance system. This approach would also allow the District to convey its wastewater to downstream fish and wildlife habitat like the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, as well as downstream water users, effectively recycling its treated wastewater for additional uses.

I respectfully encourage you to vote YES on HB 2765.

Respectfully,  
Susan Fairclo House