



Oregon

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Testimony for House Bill 3343 -3
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
Representative Ken Helm, Chair

Submitted by: Bryn Hudson, Legislative Coordinator
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the House Bill 3343 -3 amendments, which provide the Department the authority to determine which well drilling license endorsements require welding experience, based on the type of wells drilled.

History of House Bill 2145

The purpose of Oregon's Well Construction Program is to protect public health and safety by preventing water supply and monitoring wells from serving as a conduit for groundwater contamination and to protect groundwater resources for existing and future uses by preventing the draining of aquifers and groundwater declines from improperly constructed wells.

In 2021, the Department ran legislation to modernize the program. The Department worked with members of the Oregon Groundwater Association to improve the bill by reducing impacts on the well drilling community and improving the likelihood that well construction deficiencies are identified early. House Bill 2145, was passed during the 2021 legislative session and implementation has been phased in over a three-year period, as required by the new law.

Welding Requirements

Improper welding and well seal placement can contribute to contamination or commingling, and potentially the need for costly repairs. Welding training or certification was included in the bill to ensure that new drillers have a baseline understanding of welding, with the intent of reducing the number of welding deficiencies and the potential for contamination, waste, commingling, and the need for enforcement action.

HB 2145 requires completion of a welding training, professional certification, or proficiency test to obtain a new license.

This provision is operative July 1, 2023. The Department is currently working on a rulemaking to implement HB 2145. During the rule advisory committee process, the Department became aware that the law does not provide the authority to determine which types of wells require welding experience, meaning that monitoring well drillers, who rarely weld, would need to meet the same requirements as water supply well constructors.

Department's Understanding of HB 3343 -3

HB 3343 provides the Department authority to determine which types of wells require welding experience. If the Department is not granted this authority, the Commission will need to adopt rules prior to the operative date (July 1, 2023) based on the original legislation and implement accordingly, which would require welding experience for all types of wells, even if welding is not needed.