

Submitter: CJ Nugent

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3419

Representatives Helm and Owens, and members of the Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony on this bill yesterday.

I have thought a lot about the testimonies of others both in support and opposed, and have also taken into account Representative Owens clarification on the intent of this bill. (Thank you Representative Owens!)

While I do believe that more data is important to analyze and know the availability of water and use/misuse of the resource, I believe that this bill in its entire form falls very short of this goal.

As an industry professional, and a proud owner of a multigenerational Water Well Drilling Company, I can tell you many (not all) of the people that are in favor of this bill AS WRITTEN have very little to no actual experience or true knowledge in groundwater. If they did, they would know that most water right holders and municipalities are required to report data on their wells already, and that exempt use well users use less than 4% of the water in this state.

It has already been stated that the intent of this bill was not for including exempt use wells, however there are more problems that need to be addressed in this bill than just the Statute

including exempt use wells.

I could go on all day about how we could do positive change in this state without even having to pass legislation, however I would like to keep it short and focus on what I believe to be the best move forward.

I believe that before more legislation should be brought forth, time should be spent to collaborate with professionals in the GROUNDWATER industry including but not limited to the Oregon Ground Water Association and the Oregon Water Resources Department and bring forth ideas and a plan. In doing so, we would like to get a direction from your committee on what that would entail.

Groundwater and Surface water should be separated at its core because well drillers typically do not have much involvement in surface water and visa versa.

Another thing that I would like you to think about is: Even if this bill moves forward without exempt use users, does the OWRD have a plan on what they intend to do with all of this data? Industry professionals have been getting multiple reports from

them (especially since the passage of HB 2145 in 2021) on how understaffed they are in all areas of the department. How will they be able to analyze all of this data going forward? How are they using it now? These questions should be answered on record for accountability reasons!

I realize that this is in the middle of the session, so I understand that you all are extremely busy, and this is exactly why I believe that this bill should be tabled for this session and we can all collaborate together and come up with positive change for our precious resource by working together and coming up with plan to move forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I urge you to OPPOSE this bill.

CJ Nugent