



Bruce and Helle Ruddenklau
12500 SW Salt Creek Road
Amity, OR 97101

Testimony in opposition of SB 1153

Chair Golden and members of the committee.

My name is Helle Ruddenklau and my husband and I farm around 1,100 acres in Yamhill and Polk Counties and we oppose SB 1153.

When we bought our farm in 1991 it was a dryland farm. Over the years we had the opportunity to rent other farmland which had irrigation, and we discovered first-hand the benefits. First of all, we could expand the range of crops we grow, leading to a better and more profitable crop rotation. Secondly, irrigation acts as an insurance policy in years when rainfall is less than expected or timing does not coincide with the needs of the crop.

In 2007 we set out to install an irrigation pond on our property. The regulations associated with constructing a pond and getting the right to impound and use water for irrigation are significant. In fact, we still do not have our final water rights in hand. We have been told that due to staffing issues at the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) it could take another ten years for that to happen. When OWRD has a hard time keeping up with their current work load, does it really make sense to add additional layers of bureaucracy on top of that?

As farmers, we are aware that climate change is creating additional challenges in terms of growing conditions for our crops. We have seen the extreme temperatures at unexpected times of the year. Under these circumstances we need *more* flexibility not less. Being able to move water rights around to make the most efficient use of a limited resource is of utmost importance to farmers in Oregon.

Farmers work outside every day and we have a deep connection to the natural world. We care about the environment and keeping our waterways clean and abundant since we depend on it for our livelihood. That said, this bill would only add to the regulatory burden without a clear environmental benefit. The water rights system in Oregon is already struggling to allow the flexibility which farmers need to be successful. Please don't harm us further. Please vote no on SB 1153.