



Eastern Oregon Counties Association

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Representative Ken Helm, Co-Chair
Representative Mark Owens, Co-Chair
Representative Sarah Finger-McDonald, Vice-Chair
House Committee on
State Capital
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 4006

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair Finger-McDonald and Members of the Committee

The Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA) represent the 15 Eastern Oregon Counties.

EOCA is proud to support HB 4006. We understand that HB 4006 does 3 things within a 51 river-mile stretch (4%) of the 1,243-mile-long Columbia River:

- 1) Enables an intergovernmental entity, formed within the framework of ORS Chapter 190, to be granted certain authorities similar to irrigation districts for management and optimization of Columbia River water once it is diverted out of the river.
- 2) Enables the intergovernmental entity the authority to move the same diversion rate, currently authorized to be diverted out of the river, between diversions within its boundaries as long as the season of use does not change and the maximum daily pumping rate is maintained
- 3) Allows the intergovernmental entity to participate in the district mapping process to reset archaic place of use boundaries of the participating water rights into a realistic management boundary for the 21st century

EOCA supports HB 4006 for the following reasons:

HB 4006 Focuses State Regulatory Oversight on Key Concerns of Water Law while minimizing State Responsibility the mundane tasks of daily water management and effective use

This bill does not relieve the 51-mile stretch from state regulatory oversight. Rather, this bill focuses state regulatory resources on key issues necessary to ensure the foundational components of water law remain intact. The region will still be required to maintain compliance with a maximum rate of diversion out of the Columbia River and a maximum total duty within the district. We understand that this will clarify and better accurately reflect actual water use, compliance with conditions and clarity in reporting but will relieve the department of the burdensome tasks of temporary transfers and day-to-day management within the district, after the point of diversion. This should enable OWRD to focus that saved staff time on reducing the backlog for other matters in other regions of the State. We feel that modernizing management to focus state resources on key regulatory components while minimizing

mundane tasks, including day-to-day water use by local governmental entities, will help inform us all on efficiency measures that can ensure protection of the resource while also enhancing economic benefit of consumptive water supplies.

HB 4006 provides a critical component for a water sustainability solution in one-region while minimizing and preventing impacts or unintended consequences to other regions

We appreciate that this has clear geographic limitations on testing and implementation. By allowing one region to test this but limiting the geographic scope of the test, ensures that unintended consequences and/or public concern can be avoided.

HB 4006 is inclusive and provides opportunities for all members of Umatilla County and Morrow County to benefit from water sustainability and water management modernization

We commend the Umatilla Basin for finding a way for senior water rights holders to contribute their supplies to a district for the benefit of themselves and others. We have heard many times that solutions to water problems are not possible because of the certificated water rights holders having ultimate authority over a regions water. In this case, this region is providing a pathway for senior water rights holders to enroll their water rights in a local governmental entity for the benefit of those inside the boundary. If we are to find pathways to solutions it will take creative ways, under public/private partnerships, to solve problems as there is little to no opportunity for new water supplies left in eastern Oregon.

HB 4006 includes reporting requirements that can better inform other regions of our area of jurisdiction on tools that could be useful for advancing ground and surface water sustainability elsewhere

We strongly encourage the committee to keep the reporting requirements in HB 4006. This requirement ensures that the region piloting this effort will be in a position annually to better inform the state and other regions of what is working and what could work better. Information sharing is the best way to ensure that we can all become more efficient faster while minimizing areas where “re-inventing the wheel” would lead to longer delays in other basins that may be able to pursue sustainability agendas of their own. Eastern Oregon has a long-history of collaboration and information sharing to help each other out. We appreciate that the bill ensures annual reporting to provide an adequate forum for all of us to learn from each other and share information and resources necessary to meeting sustainability needs at the fastest and most economical pace.

We urge full support and passage of HB 4006

Sincerely,

Paul Anderes
Co-Chair Eastern Oregon Counties Association

**MEMBER COUNTIES: BAKER – CROOK – DECHUTES – GILLIAM – GRANT – HARNEY – JEFFERSON –
KLAMATH – MALHEUR – MORROW – SHERMAN – UMATILLA – UNION – WALLOWA - WHEELER**
