

Submitter: Lorissa Singhose
On Behalf Of: Silver Creek area farmers
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4049

Irrigators in the Silver Creek area have been working together over the past year to develop a voluntary agreement to sustainably manage our groundwater resources for current and future Oregonians. We will work with our neighbors to ensure perpetual use of our precious groundwater resources. This legislation is needed to make sure that the Water Resources Department considers the original legislative intent to engage in voluntary JOINT action with groundwater users. We want to be involved and we want to have a voice. Our area has only seen minor declines, around 3 total feet, during a megadrought and the amount of water coming into our area is more than is pumped. Our area should not be in a critical groundwater area since none of the criteria in the critical groundwater area statutes have been met. Those statutes weren't intended for places like Silver Creek. ORS 537.525 is clear that the Commission is supposed to pursue voluntary joint action to try to resolve issues before relying on the police power of the state. We have nearly every irrigator involved in our effort and intend to also reach out to all of the domestic well users. We're also committed to better understanding the relationship between pumpage and spring discharge. Many of us are multigenerational farmers and we want our kids and our kids kids to keep calling Harney County home. Thank you for supporting HB 4049 which will help support our efforts to partner with the state to ensure groundwater sustainability. We're also uploading a letter we sent to the Water Resources Commission and a situation assessment that was performed to determine whether our area was ready and interested in pursuing a voluntary agreement. We could be a success story for Oregon. Please support us.