

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action:	Do Pass and Rescind the Subsequent Referral to the Committee on Ways and Means and Be Referred to the Committee on Rules
Vote:	5 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Bates, Hansell, Hass, Olsen, Dingfelder
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Beth Reiley, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	4/16, 4/17

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires Water Resources Department (WRD) to establish Umatilla Basin Water Storage Program for developing water resources in Willow Creek, Walla Walla and Umatilla watersheds to increase water supplies in northeastern Oregon and to provide WRD services as liaison between parties wishing to engage in water-related transactions that may affect water supplies. Specifies program design and identifies measures specifically included in program. Requires WRD to dedicate at least one fulltime employee to program administration during 2013-2015 biennium. Requires Water Resources Commission to appoint work group to study and make recommendations regarding new office to address water supply issues in northeastern Oregon. Requires work group to report recommendations to 2014 Legislative Assembly. Sunsets work group upon convening of 2015 regular session of Legislative Assembly.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Columbia River Umatilla Solutions Team Agreement (CRUST)
- Balance between in-stream and out of stream water uses

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Farmers in the Umatilla basin, which includes some of Oregon's most productive agricultural land, have been seeking additional irrigation water for more than 20 years. Heavy irrigation water use dropped basin aquifers by up to 500 feet in a matter of decades, among the steepest declines worldwide. A carbon-dating study showed wells had reached water that had been underground for 27,250 years. Senate Bill 846 would create the Umatilla Basin Water Storage Program to increase water supplies in that basin.