

HB 2084

January 31, 2019

Lower John Day Working Group Place Based Planning

Good Afternoon Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present to you today.

My name is Hannah Fatland. I am the Watershed Coordinator for the Gilliam – East John Day Watershed Council and the Public Outreach committee lead for the LJDWG Place Based Water Planning Pilot. I am here today representing the work group.

The LJDWG is made up of 22 stakeholders, representing 16 different entities. The work group has 7 non-profit conservation partners participating including the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, Freshwater Trust, Water Watch, Oregon Natural Desert Association and Sustainable Northwest. Our stakeholder composition is also made up The Cattlemen's Association who is also one of our most active and consistent participants and of many agencies including ODFW, DEQ, ODA, NRCS, 3 SWCDs, 3 Watershed Councils and of course OWRD.

We are organized into two subcommittees – one for data collection and technical analysis and a second for public outreach.

Like the other Pilot groups before you today, we appreciate the support from OWRD to do this important work. We strongly believe a bottom to top collaborative model in planning our water future is critical to building the trust and relationships needed to develop a durable plan to help balance our current and future water needs. Our local residents, landowners and stakeholders want to have their voice heard and be brought into the process. The collaborative approach that ensures those voices are heard and those people are at the table is critical to our success.

As you know, the John Day River Basin in northeast Oregon is home to native aquatic fish species and habitat of state significance, small rural communities (and in our work group include: Mitchell, Spray, Fossil, Lonerock, Condon, Grass Valley and Moro) whose economies depend on agriculture and natural resources, and our area is home to exceptional historical and cultural riches – including the Painted Hills and the ancestral lands of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm spring and Umatilla reservations. The John Day River basin is one of the most important undammed river systems in the West and hosts two of the last remaining intact wild anadromous fish populations in the Columbia River System: summer steelhead and spring chinook.

Our work group is currently in Step 3 which involves assessing in and out of stream water demands – we have broken out into 4 subcommittee data teams: Instream, Municipal, Agricultural needs and Climate forecasting and hazards assessments.

I believe the greatest success of the LJDWG is the depth of commitment from our stakeholders. Though we have endured leadership changes, with the support of our non-profit partners and many agencies who are passionate about the water resource, and with our deep technical expertise we continue to remain strong and committed to our planning process. In addition, the work group is partnered with the John Day Basin Partnership. The Partnership is poised to receive \$12 million dollars from the Focused Investment Partnership or FIP OWEB grant. The partnership's FIP application was ranked #1 by the

OWEB FIP Subcommittee and was awarded earlier this month. This will provide the LJDWG restoration implementation dollars to projects the program identifies in the place-based planning process

I believe the greatest challenge facing our work group is getting landowners, irrigators, and working lands stakeholders to the table. Our work group is working in a climate of anti-government sentiment. There is anxiety over water availability and last year the region endured another drought season and bad wildfire season. The durability of our plan and success of Step 4 (wherein we create a water budget) will be dependent upon our ability to continue to grow participation from landowners and bring them in to our process. Our Outreach Committee is focused on this and has devoted much of their efforts this winter going to the public through utilizing existing meetings and forums.

This process has taken longer than we have anticipated due to staff turnover and the fact that this is a complicated process. Bottom to top collaboration is important but time consuming. However, we have had the ability to contract with partners to professionalize the process and pay for people's time and expertise has been critical. An extended timeline and additional funds will help us reach the finish line and begin implementing our plan as well as help us support OWRD in replicating this work in other basins across the state.

We ask that you extend the ending year from 2019 to 2023 so that we can, not just complete the important work of the Lower John Day Working Group's PBP effort but, ensure a valuable plan is created with the indispensable assistance from OWRD.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that I believe place-based planning and the collaborative efforts of these 4 pilots is a launching point for the state's 100-year water strategy. The social, economic and environmental health of our local communities and state is absolutely dependent upon our ability to provide clean and relatively abundant water now and into the future. We appreciate your support and interest in extending the timeline as we prepare to secure a resilient water future through multi-stakeholder local place-based planning processes.