

HB 2437

Chair Clem and Members of the Committee,

My name is Greg Bennett and I am farmer in the Lake Labish area. I grow onions, blueberries, wheat and a variety of other commodities. I am also a member of the Lake Labish drainage district, which is a farmer run district that has maintained our drainage ditches since we brought the land into production. While we always understood this activity to be exempt from permits, I recently learned that DSL has been telling farmers that they need permits for ditch cleaning.

Since we are a farmer run drainage district, our members are farmers who lack the time and experience to go through costly and drawn out permitting processes to clean ditches we have always maintained. As such, I support finding a solution for ditch cleaning that allows farmers to clean ditches with a clear and understandable guidelines, and with an agency that is already familiar with agricultural ditches and water quality. This is a much-needed solution for farmers to be able to maintain their land.

Thank you for your consideration.

Greg Bennett