



Critical Groundwater Area “Sub-Areas” targeted to receive new water supplies, providing basalt relief and testing opportunities by the 2020 irrigation Season (March 2020)

HB 2819:

FILLING OREGON

“HB 2819 could set Oregon on a pathway to reverse the ‘Draining Oregon’ trend and start ‘Filling Oregon’ again.”

Background

The Umatilla Basin wants to stabilize and recover our deep basalt groundwater aquifers relied upon by cities for growth and by farmers for late season water supply & drought/climate change resiliency. Multiple plans approved by Basin stakeholders¹ involve development of new water sources (e.g. Columbia River) to reduce pumping pressures on deep basalt aquifers. Columbia River supply projects, funded in-part by the 2015 Oregon Legislature are ramping up to start delivering replacement water by 2020. The next step in fixing water supply and sustainability problems in the Umatilla Basin is ready. Climate change and economic growth require immediate focus on basalt aquifer relief and banking strategies.

Needs and Purpose of HB 2819

Regional Needs (identified through the 2018 Basalt Stabilization Work Group):	What HB 2819 Does:
<p>Need #1: To test strategies to save and bank groundwater currently being pumped, senior water rights holders need assurance that both their water rights will be <u>protected</u> and that water they agree not to be pump will be <u>protected</u> from others pumping it during the testing period.</p>	<p>HB 2819 ensures that landowners participating in a groundwater savings program will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Be protected from losing their current water rights 2) See that water they save will be protected by the State from further appropriation
<p>Need #2: As the Columbia River projects are currently more expensive than pumping groundwater, a cost share must be instituted to make up the difference between pumping sustainable Columbia River water and pumping native groundwater.</p>	<p>HB 2819 provides funding, during a pilot period, to make up the difference between pumping the more expensive Columbia River water and pumping native groundwater, ensuring that water right holders will be able to participate in the program without being harmed financially.</p>
<p>Question to be Answered through Pilot: Can we recover our groundwater aquifers naturally</p>	

Contact: Northeast Oregon Water Association, J.R. Cook, (541-969-8026), jrcook@northeastoregonwater.org

¹ Umatilla Groundwater Task Force Report to the Governor (1986), Umatilla Sub-Basin 2050 Water Management Plan (2008), Columbia River – Umatilla Solutions Task Force Declaration of Cooperation (2013), Governor’s Task Force on Umatilla Basin Basalt Stabilization (December, 2018)