

April 19, 2019

Via Email



Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Information about the Deschutes Basin Board of Control \$25 million bonding request

Dear Senators and Representatives:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information regarding the \$25 million bonding request for the Deschutes Basin Board of Control (DBBC). Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA) is a non-profit organization that works with irrigation districts throughout Oregon to help them modernize their systems for the benefit of the local economy and environment.

Most irrigation districts throughout Oregon are delivering water to urban, suburban and rural farms and ranches via systems that were constructed over 100 years ago. Modernizing irrigation infrastructure, including converting open, leaky canals to closed, pressurized pipes system not only delivers water more reliably and economically to patrons, it also reduces the amount of water needed to irrigate by up to 60%. That conserved water can be permanently protected in-stream for the benefit of fish and river systems. FCA's irrigation modernization program helps districts to identify how they can invest in new water delivery to increase efficiency, save energy, install new in-conduit hydropower projects, conserve water, and improve habitat for fish.

Recently, the Oregon Congressional Delegation has worked to appropriate \$450 million into the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (P.L. 83-566), administered by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). To date, NRCS has contracted with the DBBC to provide \$75 million in funding for irrigation modernization capital construction and technical assistance. The Oregon Congressional Delegation is working to secure an additional \$25 million in project implementation capital. This federal money will be invested in projects that:

- Conserve water that can be permanently protected instream for the benefit of fish and wildlife;
- Reduce water lost to evaporation and seepage to make rural water supplies more resilient;



- Efficiently and economically deliver water to patrons;
- Create opportunities for the installation of in-conduit hydroelectric power and generation of clean renewable energy;
- Provide farmers and ranchers the opportunity to reduce their energy load, significantly cutting the cost of production; and
- Increase public safety.

The P.L. 83-566 funding will provide 75% of project capital for projects, but is required to be matched 25%. Any investment of state resources would be leveraged 3:1.

Thank you for your time and please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Julie O'Shea'.

Julie O'Shea  
Executive Director