

April 25th 2019

Chair Holvey and members of the House Committee on Rules.

For the record, my name is Mark Owens, I am a Harney County Commissioner and a farmer in Harney County, Oregon.

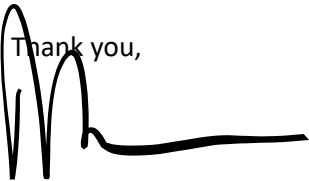
I write today to ask you to join me in support of House Concurrent Resolution 33. This resolution is needed and will support the Governor's natural resource goal of developing a 100-year plan for our state's water needs. I support this effort in whole, though there is one area in specific that I am gaining a lot of experience in and will focus my comments in regards to:

(3) Explore new opportunities for collaboration and innovative water solutions that result in positive net environmental health and economic benefits to communities.

As a Harney County Commissioner I have been one of the conveners for a pilot collaborative program called Placed Based Planning. This water planning effort is tasked with developing an integrated water plan that addresses in-stream, out-of-stream, quality and quantity. This effort falls right in line with with new opportunities for collaboration and innovative water solutions that result in positive net environmental health and economic benefits to communities. Our collaborative has been looking at the water challenges and opportunities in our basin for the last two and a half years. We have brought together a diverse group of stakeholders in order to identify the current situation, project our water needs into the future, and work on solutions that can be incorporated into an integrated water plan. This collaborative effort will be successful and pass the test of time due to the inclusive nature of our collaborative.

Theses new opportunities for collaboration need to be led by the communities that the water solutions will be implemented in. The diverse group of stakeholders that are needed to be successful must not be limited to that community but those communities need to reach out to all that have a desire to be involved with water planning in that area. The local communities are the social and economic authorities and understand the specific challenges that water solutions will play in their communities. If they are not given the opportunity for ownership theses plans will fail and cost the state in litigation. Conversely, if a broad inclusive group of stakeholders are not involved this will also cause the developed plans to be unsuccessful.

If you currently do not have a water problem in your area, just wait, there is one coming to a neighborhood close to you. We need to be proactive to come up with unique solutions as a one size fits all approach will not work with water planning. Please support House Concurrent resolution 33. This will help guide us in the right direction as our Sate begins to address our 100-year water plan.

Thank you,


Mark Owens
Harney County Commissioner