

Senate Bill 393

BLUE MOUNTAIN TRANSLATOR DISTRICT
ALEX MCHADDAD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What is a Translator District?

- A TV translator is a broadcast station that relays a TV signal between 2 different geographic regions.
- BMTD relays TV signals from Portland and Boise to Union and Baker Counties.
- Founded in 1978. Only peer institution in Oregon, in Maupin, closed in 2008.

Administrative Problems

- Revenue: Funded by voluntary service charges, not property taxes.
 - Mail annual service charge liability notice. Property owners pay for signal or request an exemption. If the notice is not returned, the charge is placed on the following year's property taxes as a lien. This results in extreme revenue volatility.
- Translator districts may not incorporate cities with cable. BMTD entirely surrounds but does not incorporate 10 cities in Union and Baker Counties.
 - Only city properties verified to have an antenna by physical inspection may receive a notice. BMTD cannot regularly inspect cities. A sweep of cities last fall found over 300 unregistered TV antennas.
- City residents cannot serve on our board even though BMTD makes decisions that affect their property taxes.
- ODFW regularly fails to return notices for 2 properties, increasing state payments in lieu of tax by \$400 every biennium.

Solutions

- Permit city voters to consider annexation into the District, effective 2021. BMTD will be able to inform all potential viewers of service charge liability, not just properties where we can physically view an antenna.
- Permit all service charge payers to serve on BMTD's Board of Directors.
- Exempt state properties from BMTD service charges.

Community Support

- Introduced provisions of SB 393 are supported by:
 - Baker & Union Counties
 - Cities of Baker City, Haines, North Powder, Imbler, Elgin
- SB 393 passed unanimously in the Senate.