

NORTHEAST OREGON WATER ASSOCIATION

Via Electronic Mail and Hand Delivery

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Bill Hansell
State Capitol
900 Court St. NE, Suite S-415
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 1562 (Confirmation of Support from the Northeast Oregon Water Association)

Dear Senator Hansell:

On behalf of the Northeast Oregon Water Association (NOWA), we wanted to provide you with this letter in advance of the initial reading of Senate Bill 1562 to express our strong support for the provisions contained therein.

NOWA is a non-profit organization that advocates for the protection and enhancement of our value-added natural resource-based economy in Northeast Oregon. Our membership includes over 250,000 acres of the highest valued food production land in Oregon as well as the counties, cities, ports and businesses that generate over \$2.5 billion a year in agri-business output in our region. Key to protection and enhancement of this economy is sustainable groundwater quantity and healthy groundwater quality.

NOWA worked closely with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and various stakeholders to support POP 350, originally included in HB 5002 during the 2019 Oregon Legislative Session. That package was critically important to agricultural, municipal, industrial and environmental interests in the Umatilla Basin as it would have provided funding to the OSU Institute of Natural Resources to facilitate the development of an interagency team including ODA, DEQ, OHA, with technical support from agencies such as OWRD, to work with local stakeholders and interest groups to make forward progress on fixing the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA).

As you are aware, POP 350 was not formally opposed during the 2019 session but did not receive funding. SB 1562 attempts to set up the same Task Force as the 2019 effort which remains a critical need to memorializing a pathway forward to fixing and documenting progress in the LUBGWMA. For these reasons we support SB 1562. We appreciate the leadership of your office and the co-sponsors of this bill in bringing this need forward during the 2020 short session and look forward to working with you as this Bill moves forward.

Sincerely,



J.R. Cook

Director

CC: NOWA Membership

