



TUALATIN VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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April 29, 2021

To: Chair Ken Helm, Vice-Chair Mark Owens, Vice-Chair Jeff Reardon, and Members of the House Water Committee

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 130, Extension of District Temporary Transfer Pilot Program

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair Reardon and Members of the House Water Committee,

Tualatin Valley Irrigation District (TVID) manages irrigation water delivery for up to 17,000 acres of farmland annually in Washington County. SB 130 (formerly SB 267) has proven to be an invaluable tool for effective and responsible management of irrigation practices. It allows for the flexibility of our patrons to directly manage their crop rotations without the cumbersome and lengthy process of standard water right transfers. It enables farmers across our district to more easily implement and prescribe to best management practices as it pertains to crop rotation and soil conservation.

The standard district water right transfer process falls short of providing irrigators with an efficient means to manage their needs on a year-to-year basis. Often, the transfer process can take months (or longer) to complete and the associated fees can be burdensome to many small farmers. SB 130 eliminates much of the unneeded time and financial obligations for seasonal, short-term transfers. Many of the seasonal transfers within irrigation districts under the ongoing pilot program help farmers overcome the challenges they face on a seasonal basis. The short-term needs also play a key role in sustaining the long-term ecological health of our farmlands, most notably allowing for crop rotation to mitigate the effects of agriculture on soil and water quality.

In addition to the benefits of SB 130 to irrigators and the ecosystem, the pilot program also relieves the Water Resources Department (WRD) of the many hours of staff time dedicated to the transfer process. The pilot program fosters a strong relationship between TVID and WRD by necessitating communication and allowing for the transparency of irrigated district lands on an annual basis. This serves as an effective enforcement tool during irrigation season. The ability of WRD to have districts' irrigated acreage mapped annually is an effective tool to monitor proper use of the State's water.

Extending the pilot program would help sustain agriculture in our region for many years to come. I would opine that it may be of great benefit to Oregon's economic and environmental livelihood to consider making the pilot program permanent, thereby eliminating the need for ongoing resources to keep extending what has proven to be a great asset for the State and for the irrigation districts.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support of SB 130.

Sincerely,

Bobby Nuvolini

District Manager

Tualatin Valley Irrigation District