

Testimony of Sabrina Carey

Thank you Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Reardon and Owens. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you briefly about HB 2616. My name is Sabrina Carey and I live outside of Eagle Point in Northern Jackson County.

In 2010, my husband and I moved to the property off Butte Falls Highway as renters and understood the pond was ours to use and enjoy. After renting for about four years, we were given the opportunity to purchase the property. Unaware of the pond's illegal status, we moved forward with the purchase.

In 2016, almost 2 years after we bought the property, I contacted the Water Master to ask about our water rights. We invited the Water Master to our property to see the pond for himself. At which point he informed us that the pond was unregistered and built without permits. It must be drained, the dam removed, and we must pay for it. So we looked into removing the pond and the dam. We received an estimate of \$115,000, which does not include fees for any permits that may be required by the county or the state nor does it include fees for water removal.

The water in the pond does not come from a river, a creek, or any other above ground water source. It is spring fed. There is an outlet at the west end where the waters flows out year round. The water is not used for any purposes other than firefighting and however nature herself sees fit. The pond is a tremendous benefit to the community as a firefighting resource. We have received letters of support from Jackson County Fire District 3 (both in 2016 and 2021) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (in 2016) urging the pond to remain intact as a firefighting resource as it is large enough for helicopters to refill their dip buckets multiple times and easily accessible for tanker trucks to drive right up and fill their tanks as well. Fire agencies have limited access to water in rural areas and our pond could service multiple fire agencies. Removal could lead to their inability to obtain water and return to the fire location in a timely manner.

I do understand there are a number of adjustments or modifications that will need to be made in order for the pond to be registered and I am ready and willing to work with the Oregon Water Resources Department in order to bring my pond into compliance.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I urge you to vote in favor of HB 2616.

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