4/27/2021

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

RE: Floor Letter 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 Committee:

The Santiam Water Control District (SWCD) provides irrigation water to over 17,000 acres in the Stayton, Aumsville, and South Salem areas. The pilot transfer program allows 15 districts including ours to simplify the process of transferring water rights under a controlled pilot that is now clearly demonstrating multiple benefits. The Pilot Process has been critical in allowing our District to transfer water rights in a method that reduces the cost and burden on our landowners, while improving water management. We urge your support of this Bill.

We have utilized the program to annually transfer approximately 375 acres, Involving 20-30 tax lots. The program is of particular benefit to financially struggling farmers and landowners that would otherwise be subject to expensive transfer fees and regulatory burden. The program benefits our district and community by:

- optimizes transfers in a basin that is otherwise closed to new appropriations (no new water),

- Allows a simple low-cost way to provide and ensure beneficial use of District water rights.

- provides stability, allowing the district to better manage, use, and protect water rights within its purview.

- Aids the Water Resources Dept, and the on the ground Watermasters. The process provides clear notice and involvement of local OWRD staff providing them information in the format most useful to them, while not creating an overwhelming pile of administrative paperwork at the state administrative office.

The pilot process has proved itself as a workable solution providing a multitude of benefits all without negative consequences. We urge you to pass SB 130 and we thank you for your support.

Brent Stevenson

Brent Stevenson, District Manager
 Santiam Water Control District