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**TESTIMONY –**  
**HB 2244**  
**House Committee on Water**  
**February 11, 2021**

Chair Helm, Vice Chair Owens, Vice Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee,  
Thank you for hearing our testimony on HB 2244.

My name is Cheryl Martin. I am a 6<sup>th</sup> generation rancher from Eastern Oregon. We raise cattle, hay and grains. I am a past District 2 Vice President for Oregon Cattlemen's Association (OCA) and I currently serve as the Legislative Committee Chair for OCA.

As you are probably aware, water for farmers and ranchers is beyond critical. Especially in parts of the state where annual rainfall is minimal. Without irrigation, crop production is vastly limited.

HB 2244 is an extreme threat to my ability to keep our ranch sustainable and financially viable. Instead of 3-4 cuttings of hay in a season, we would be limited to one cutting of diminished quality. Instead of 90-100 bushels of wheat per acre we might be limited to 50-60. Instead of fall pasture for cattle after the crops have been harvested, there would be nothing but dry fields. Some pastures would be impacted by lack of stock water.

One must look at the devaluation of land in the interim that the shut off is being enacted. What about the fixed costs that the rancher is still required to pay even if there is no production on the land. Taxes, land payments, equipment payments, feed costs, vet costs, fuel costs. How is the landowner going to meet those obligations without a revenue source? Funding a legal challenge against a shut off order that could potentially prove incorrect since there has been no hearing on the issue yet, could be so insurmountable that the rancher or farmer may never be able to recoup the losses.

The impact that HB 2244 has on the importance of private property rights, our sacred water rights, and due process cannot be overstated.

**Cheryl Martin, OCA Legislative Committee Chair**

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For us, as irrigators and ranchers, to face the looming threat of a state agency or another entity making a decision that impacts our very livelihood and then to not have the constitutional right to due process in protection of our business is unrealistic at best. HB 2244 removes the historical safeguards that were put in place to allow a property owner the ability to continue ranching or farming while a judicial review is ongoing. To shut off the water which is the very lifeblood of an operation, for an indeterminate amount of time while a decision to the merits of a case are being pondered, can and will be the demise of generational farms and ranches.

We **must** have the security of knowing that our water and water rights will be available from season to season and year to year.

HB 2244 may seem inconsequential and somewhat frivolous to many, but if the very future of one's business and the succession for future generations is at stake, then you will see that it is indeed a very serious matter and I urge you to consider this bill with utmost diligence.

For the aforementioned reasons, I am opposed to the passage of HB 2244.  
Thank you so very much for your time.

Cheryl Martin  
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