

Ken Helm  
Water Resources Department  
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A  
Salem, Oregon 97301

February 15, 2021

**RE: Support of HB 3092**

Dear Chair Ken Helm:

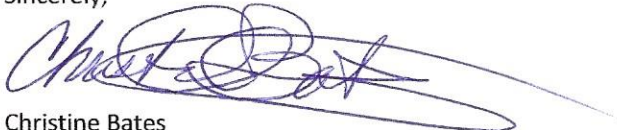
I am a resident of the Greater Harney Valley Groundwater Area of Concern. When my husband and I moved to this area almost 12 years ago, we found a nice little ranch, and settled down for our final retirement move. We loved the area, and the community as it made us feel welcome. But through time things change, and a new disturbing situation has rocked our peaceful community. Although we purchased a small ranch with good well water, it did not last as long as we wanted it to. Within 3 years we had to lower our pump to the bottom of our well. Over all, there was a 30 foot drop in our well in one year after numerous irrigation wells were put on line near our ranch. Now I do not mind people making a good living, but when it affects ones neighbors' health and welfare, it becomes a real problem.

Water is one of the basic needs for survival, and yet it is being denied many of us in this community. As retirees when our well went dry, we were struggling to keep available water, by hauling, and taking all showers in our travel trailer. We finally decided to sell our cows to pay for the deepening of our well. But that did not ultimately take care of our problem for our well though deeper has a higher than acceptable amount of arsenic now. During the summer months when the irrigation wells are pumping the water is higher in arsenic, and no filtration system can remove it for drinking purposes; therefore, we are still hauling water. For a while we were able to fill up containers at the Senior Center for free, but now that is not available, and we have to purchase our drinking water from local grocery stores. This plus having the increased electric bill for pulling water up from 80 feet, puts additional hardship on our fixed income. Currently, we do not have cows to sell to provide an efficient filtration system for our well. The little amount we receive from grazing our neighbor's cows is being put aside for upgrading the filtration system in our well house.

There are many other families experiencing these losses, and the issue of clean healthy water for living is making it difficult for several families to make the decision to remain in this area. We all recognize that ground water has been over allocated for agricultural use by the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWARD) with no regard to those of us living in this rural community. The decline in available groundwater should have immediate attention, and many need assistance to provide this basic human requirement. The HB 3092 fund represents a much-needed support for the water needs of rural domestic well users who have been negatively affected by OWRD's general negligence.

We must in the future never allow this type of over allocation of water to happen to any community again, and we must find ways to reduce the use of groundwater for future generations to survive. The HB 3092 is a Band-Aid on the overall problem, but will assist residents to continue to reside in Harney County. Please, I urge your yes vote on HB 3092.

Sincerely,



Christine Bates  
63848 Hwy 205  
Burns, OR 97720