

Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

**SOCAN**

Confronting Climate Change

<https://socan.eco>

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Chair Helm and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, and Water

I write as co-facilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now on behalf of the over 1600 rural Southern Oregonians who are SOCAN. Our mission is to promote awareness and understanding of the science of global warming and its climate change consequences and motivate individual and collective action to address the resulting climate crisis.

As we address the climate crisis, we are conscious that we must not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote carbon sequestration, we must also prepare for the inevitable climate change consequences that will befall us. One of the most obvious problems we will face is water shortage due to increased evaporation of that which is available, combined with reduced snowpack limiting summer and fall stream flow. This means that water conservation is and will continue to be a critical feature of our future.

Currently, the individual in each county responsible for monitoring water usage is the watermaster, an employee of the state Department of Water Resources. While this individual is responsible for monitoring water abuse, current law does not allow that individual to enter private property to assess water use. This means the individual has a mandate to do what he or she cannot do if the landowner declines access. This is patently absurd.

While HB4061 does not grant the watermaster right to access private property whenever desired, the bill does accord that individual the option of seeking a petition for a warrant to enter private property to assess water usage.

In rural Southern Oregon, the problem of water abuse is particularly evidence among growers of plants in the Cannabaceae family. Thus, we support the notion that the penalty imposed by HB4061 may equal the value of the crop being grown using the illegal water.

Respectfully submitted



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