

Submitter: Kip Krebs

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB455

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Kip Krebs and I'm the Representative for the Willow Creek Water Users for Morrow and Gilliam Counties. Willow Creek runs through Morrow County, along State Highway 74, and empties into the Columbia River in Gilliam County. Over the last 50 years, parts of Willow Creek have become completely dry in the Summer months which stops our Water Users from being able to irrigate their crops and limits the amount of crops in which they can grow. Since the majority of the Water Users land sits in the Ella Butte Critical Groundwater Zone, drilling an irrigation well isn't allowed and financially impractical for most of our smaller farm operations.

With the help of our District Watermaster, and both Morrow and Gilliam County Governmental Agencies, we found that there is a solution for our problem. Aquifer Recharge is the most cost effective way to store Willow Creeks High Flow Winter run-off water from the months of December thru April. Water users then can use this stored water to irrigate in the months that they normally would run out of water plus have the ability to diversify their crops on their farm.

Since 2020, both Morrow & Gilliam County Governmental Agencies, and over 20 Willow Creek Water Users, have teamed up together to help make an Aquifer Recharge Project happen. Morrow County has 1,692 acres that would benefit from this water project and 480 acres for Gilliam County. To date, both Morrow and Gilliam County Courts have matched the funds needed for our joint Governmental Agencies to apply for the Oregon Water Resources Department 1069 Re-Use and Storage Feasibility Program in the Fall of this year.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 455. If this Senate Bill passes, it will help us with our projects future needs that will benefit all of our small and large Farm Operations. Having assistance with recharge operations and monitoring will not just support our project but the needs of future projects.

Thank you for your time.

Kip Krebs  
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