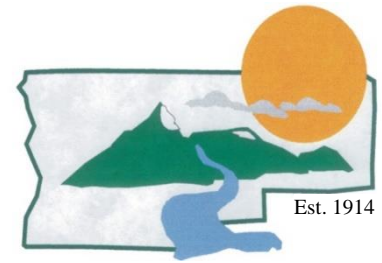


# JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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February 14, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources

Re: **SB 58**

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, and Committee Members;

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 58, which provides an opportunity to develop a cloud seeding program to enhance water availability in Oregon. On January 15<sup>th</sup> of this year, the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners requested a Drought Declaration for Jefferson County. This Executive Order was signed by Governor Tina Kotek on February 15, 2023, marking the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of Declaration of Drought. Like many regions of Oregon, the Deschutes Basin has been extremely compromised. The storage reservoirs in the Deschutes Basin have capacity of 554,000-acre feet of water but currently only have 209,000-acre feet in them. This is roughly **38% of capacity** with irrigation season roughly one month away.

The Deschutes Basin operates under a Habitat Conservation Plan to protect the Oregon Spotted Frog. This level of drought is catastrophic for creatures, the river and the farmer. State and federally funded canal piping projects have provided great water savings and on-farm conservation measures/options have nearly been exhausted. I believe it is time to add another tool to the toolbox and that comes in the form of Senate Bill 58.

Senate Bill 58, starts the conversation around "Cloud Seeding" at the Oregon Water Resources Department. Cloud Seeding has been highly successful in augmenting and sustaining Idaho's water resources for many years. By their own admissions there are no negative repercussions and it is a very cost-effective way to promote water surety. The economy of Oregon and the welfare of Oregonians depends on a reliable and sustainable water supply, so it is essential that the state continues to identify, develop and implement projects like this. I believe that Idaho has provided the roadmap to success in Oregon having sustainable water sources, healthy rivers and habitat as unique as Oregon.

I implore this committee to **SUPPORT SB 58** so that we can give the water experts in this state the tools they need to promote water security for all of us.

Sincerely,  
Kelly Simmelink  
Jefferson Co. Board Chair