

Submitter: Maud and Tom Powell

On Behalf Of: Wolf Gulch Farm

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water Measure: HB2929

I am writing in support of injunctive authority to stop illegal water use as proposed in HB2929.

This critical bill would permit our regulators to protect Oregon farmers, ranchers, livestock, and wildlife from the harm of illegal water theft.

Water may be the most precious commodity in Southern Oregon; willful waste, diversion, and use of water that one has no right to is unacceptable.

We have been farming in Southern Oregon since 1998 and making at least half of our income from our farm business and have two employees. Currently, we grow certified organic vegetable and flower seed crops sold on contract to seven seed companies across the country, including Johnny's and High Mowing.

During both the summers of 2021 and 2022, our irrigation water was cut off earlier than expected, due, in large part, to an illegal cannabis operation up the river from us. As a result, we had decreased yields in our crops. Not only did our business lose money, but the seed companies we grow for had less seed than expected for the subsequent years catalogue. We know several other farmers in our small valley with the same concerns. Because of water scarcity, we are moving our farm to the main stem of the Applegate with an agriculture well that we can better control.

Please consider supporting this bill. Oregon will not be the same without small-scale farmers who rely on increasingly scarce irrigation water for our economic viability.

Thank you.