

WILLAMETTE VALLEY

VINEYARDS

Statement in Support for HB 3124, the BiDRAWS Package

Willamette Valley Vineyards supports HB 3124, the Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package, which acknowledges that water issues are a challenge throughout Oregon. The measure represents a comprehensive, coordinated and robust approach to addressing water issues across the state from general components of “Planning, Coordination and Capacity” and “Data and Analysis” to numerous projects in Oregon.

One of those projects is addressed in Component 1-11 which would provide support for the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan. The aquifer in the Walla Walla Basin is shared by both Oregon and Washington which provides a unique set of challenges to managing the water in the basin. Willamette Valley Vineyards has several different vineyards in the Milton-Freewater area and is a member of the Sevein Water Association (SWA) which manages water for approximately a dozen wineries that have vineyards on the Sevein ridge. In turn, the Sevein Water Association is an active member in WOW (Washington Oregon Water - see information on the following page regarding WOW’s Vision Statement).

SWA and WOW have been working with Sen. Bill Hansell and Rep. Bobby Levy on the development and passage of SB 956 which would be the vehicle for the funding in Component 1-11. SB 956 would authorize the State of Oregon to enter a compact with the State of Washington and to partner with federal agencies, tribes and water users to manage water resources in the basin. The initial funding includes one position for the Oregon Water Resources Department with other funding to be determined. Similar legislation in Washington is moving through its Legislature.

Willamette Valley Vineyards, SWA and WOW Oregon urges your support of HB 3124, the Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package, which provides Oregon and its citizens a sustainable water future.

Prepared by Bill Cross & Elizabeth Howe, Government Affairs, Willamette Valley Vineyards

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Washington Oregon Water (WOW)

WOW¹ is a collaborative group of agricultural water users who farm in the Walla Walla Valley. WOW members reflect a thriving, yet fragile agricultural sector that is foundational to the local economy.

Vision.

Wow envisions a comprehensive and sustainable water management approach to improved stream flows, stabilized groundwater levels, with adequate, reliable and secure water for agricultural irrigation. Plentiful water for the valley will enhance the regional economy and simultaneously provide immense benefits to both stakeholders and the natural environment for many generations to come.

How to Achieve the Vision:

WOW supports efforts to secure a water supply that balances the health of the Walla Walla basin's ecosystem while facilitating continued economic growth and prosperity. More specifically, WOW envisions a pump and pipeline system that will distribute water for irrigation from the Columbia River on the one hand, while restoring and protecting the natural flow of the Walla Walla River on the other, thus enhancing and sustaining the critically important fish population. It further envisions an aquifer recharge system to stabilize the declining water table in the valley.

WOW:

- Recognizes the interconnected nature of the river and ground water system and the threat to them posed by seasonal climate variability and long-term climate change.
- Supports the Walla Walla Water 2050 project for direction and planning.
- Supports legislation leading to a bi-state water management agreement.
- Supports the flow targets for fish as established by CTUIR.²
- Desires to provide leadership in water management and adoption of more efficient irrigation technology.
- Desires to provide leadership in maximizing energy efficiency and resiliency through development and implementation of renewable energy and storage solutions.

WOW is committed to collaborate with valley stakeholders to develop an optimal water stewardship system that is sustainable for many generations to come.

¹WOW Washington, LLC and WOW Oregon, LLC are both charitable organizations with 501(c)(3) non-profit status.

²Confederate Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation