

Submitter: John Hamburg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Given climate change, water may well become the most important resource in the near future. The Ogallala aquifer of the midwestern United States provides an example of the catastrophic consequence of minimal and poor regulation of natural water supply, with both agriculture and nature now experiencing permanent severe decline in the resource.

To address this potential situation in Oregon, a robust system of monitoring and research should be in place.

The cuts proposed to the Oregon Water Resource Department programs for groundwater studies, stream gages, water masters, water measurement and hydrologists would deprive water management of the very data on which intelligent decisions are made. Such cuts in OWRD Reduction Packages 090-093 should not be approved.

OWRD POP 111 should be funded to determine if water is in fact available for new surface water uses.

OWRD POP 114 should be funded to address the water crisis in the Klamath and Harney Basins.

HB 3099 will help address the threats of the recurring drying events in Lake Abert which is a very important stopover for migratory birds. A similar crisis is finally being addressed at the Great Salt Lake.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is a very important participant in water decisions, as Oregon's wildlife is vulnerable to decisions made regarding agriculture water use. ODFW's water programs should continue to receive full funding.

In addition, ODFW POP 107 should be funded because of the need for Oregon participation in regional water collaboratives in regards to the needs of wildlife.