



# Representative Bobby Levy

*Serving Umatilla, Union & Wallowa Counties*

## **Testimony in Support of Bill SB 1567: Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan**

Chair Helm, Vice Chair Hartman and Vice Chair Owens, and members of the committee, for the record, I am Bobby Levy, state representative for house district 58.

I sit before you today in strong support of Bill SB 1567, which outlines the implementation of the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan. This plan, centered around collaborative, bistate water management in the Walla Walla River Basin, represents a significant step forward in ensuring sustainable water resource management for the benefit of current and future generations.

For some background and context, the Walla Walla Basin is within the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservations' homeland but is divided by the Oregon-Washington border. The tribes have spent over \$100 million over the past several decades trying to resolve the water issues and restore the fisheries, however the restoration efforts have failed because the two states have been unable to work in collaboration effectively.

One of the most commendable aspects of this bill is its emphasis on collaboration and inclusivity. By requiring the Water Resources Department to collaborate with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the State of Washington, and a diverse array of stakeholders, including agricultural, environmental, and governmental representatives, the bill ensures that all voices are heard and considered in the decision-making process. This collaborative approach not only fosters transparency and accountability but also promotes innovative solutions that consider the complex and interconnected nature of water resource management.

Furthermore, the bill's commitment to shared funding for the implementation of the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan demonstrates a recognition of the need for collective responsibility in addressing water challenges. By allocating resources from federal, private, and nonstate sources, including entities that directly benefit from the plan's projects, the bill distributes the financial burden equitably and ensures that all stakeholders have a vested interest in the plan's success.

Moreover, the emphasis on an integrated water resources management approach is particularly noteworthy. By addressing a wide range of water resource and ecosystem challenges, including fish passage, habitat functions, and agricultural and municipal water supply, the plan recognizes the interconnectedness of various water uses and aims to optimize benefits for both humans and the environment. This holistic approach is essential for promoting resilience in the face of climate change and other environmental stressors.

Finally, the bill's commitment to developing a legal and regulatory framework in consultation with affected federally recognized Indian tribes and the State of Washington is a crucial step towards promoting equitable allocation, distribution, and management of water resources. By ensuring that the interests and rights of all stakeholders are respected and protected, the bill lays the foundation for a more just and sustainable water future.

In conclusion, I urge you to support Bill SB 1567 and the implementation of the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan. By prioritizing collaboration, inclusivity, and sustainability, this bill represents a significant opportunity to address water challenges in the Walla Walla River Basin and beyond. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Best,

Bobby Levy, HD 58

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobby Levy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.