

Walla Walla River Irrigation District

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Senate Committee on Veterans,
Emergency Management, Federal
and World Affairs

Dear Committee

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Thatcher, and honorable members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Travis Trumbull. I am farmer and the District Manager/patron of the Walla Walla River Irrigation District in Milton Freewater Oregon. I am also a Walla Walla 2050 Strategic Plan Basin Advisory Committee member representing Oregon Agriculture in the Walla Walla Basin.

The Walla Walla River Irrigation District consists of approximately 2900 acres of orchards, vineyards, row crops, pasture and livestock. We irrigate those acres with surface water from the Walla Walla River. Our surface water rights are the oldest in the basin, after the 1855 Treaty Rights.

What started in 1996 from the unification of 5 separate water districts, the Walla Walla River Irrigation District emerged as a basin wide partner for collaborative efforts for the responsible use of our shared resource: Water. For well over 40 years, patrons of the district have adjusted irrigation methods, crop types and farming practices to keep up with available technologies, fast changing economics and the inevitable, continued strain on water that has other uses and needs besides just irrigated agriculture. Cognizant of our other basin partner's needs, communication, understanding and mutual respects has guided and will continue to drive our efforts.

In 2023 and 2024, WA HB 1322 and OR HB 1567 were passed that proved to be a pivotal moment in basin wide planning efforts in that our valley finally had the tools to work together across the OR and WA stateline. Those two bills afforded that efforts being made in each respective state would be recognized, honored and protected, regardless of the invisible, yet problematic stateline that had all but erased hard fought efforts that have been made over the prior century.

Keeping up with the momentum that WA 1322 and OR 1567 have provided the basin, OR SB 761 will direct much needed investment dollars to implement Walla Walla 2050 priority projects that will have direct, positive impacts to municipal, environmental, fishery, Tribal and farming activities. OR SB 761 will also provide water management tools to our basin that will allow an in-stream benefit at critical times to support hatchery programs and endangered species.

A sincere Thank You to OR SB 761 sponsors; Senator Nash and Representative Levy and all other supporters and proponents. Committee: Thank you for your time today.

Travis Trumbull