

Submitter: Katie Baltzor
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB427

I am writing in opposition to SB 427, which adds the language of "diminishment of streamflow" to the current water right transfer laws. I am a rancher in Eastern Oregon where we rely on our water rights to produce hay and pasture for our cattle. Flood irrigation provides substantial benefit to migratory and resident waterfowl and other wildlife, as well. Under current law, when seeking a transfer for a point of diversion, there is a standard to cause no injury to other water users and to not enlarge your own water right. A new standard of a water transfer that cannot diminish streamflow is just another way to gain in-stream rights without taking the necessary steps to secure an in-stream right. This language is very broad and vague. It will have a negative impact on the ability to manage water efficiently. It would require a lot of data collection and analysis on someone's part to even determine if the transfer would cause "diminishment of streamflow". Is OWRD really going to invest in the necessary tools, training, data collection and analysis to accomplish this? What is the standard utilized to determine if the streamflow is diminished? This potentially will create more protests and OWRD already has many of these that have remained unsolved for YEARS.

I am strongly opposed to this bill and hope you will not move it forward.