

Submitter: Matthew Lisignoli
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1153

As a struggling Central Oregon farmer, I oppose senate bill 1153 which takes another tool out of a farmer's limited toolbox. We wrestle every year to receive enough water, find enough help and pay the input costs of growing food for this state. In the last five years this farm has produced good and bad crops depending on water availability. Inherent risks of farming are weather and market related, but redundant restrictions like SB 1153, placed upon us limit our ability to mitigate extreme conditions.

Apparently farming is an insignificant industry when compared to an organism existing near a reservoir created for growing crops. The spotted frog, and the "habitat conservation plan" created by its existence, means during the winter we release the necessary summer irrigation water stored in Wickiup reservoir, and the farmers which created and meant to benefit from it, pay for all, but receive half the allotted water. This has a compounding effect, as we still pay the full amount to rent ground, and now the added expense of maintaining fallow ground without any revenue. This open ground is prone to weeds, wind and water erosion. The ability to transfer irrigation water can help the situation, but as I attempted to transfer several acre feet in 2021, the process was undeveloped, slow and complicated, with little understanding by the state how to complete the transaction. This is a solution legislature should work on, rather than adding additional roadblocks like SB 1153. Please help the farmers in this state.