

Crook-Wheeler County *Farm Bureau*

498 S.E. Lynn Blvd. Prineville, OR 97754

March 25, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife

Oppose SB 1153

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash and Committee Members,

Crook-Wheeler County Farm Bureau is a member organization of over 100 farmers and ranchers. Our membership consists of small and large farms and ranches many that have Oregon Water Rights; we value the land, water and the ability to provide food and fiber for our community and world. We participate in conservation projects and serve on various boards and committees to monitor and protect water quality.

Water is vital to the survival of our crops and stock, our water rights are very important to our family farms. SB 1153 is a solution in search of a problem. In fact if implemented it may hamper the efficient use of water. You may not know but a water rights transfer is required whenever a water right holder seeks a change in point of diversion, point of appropriation, type of use, place of use or any combination of these and would not effect ESA or Water Quality. There is no need for a third party scrutiny. SB 1153 ignores existing public review requirements currently required through OWRD's water rights transfer process. By adding superfluous layers of bureaucratic review, the bill would have a chilling effect on the efficient use of water throughout our state through the threat of litigation from activist third parties.

This bill would limit water use **flexibility** by imposing vague and broad environmental assessments and would restrict a water user's ability to adapt when better and more efficient ways of irrigation come. It also opens the door to **litigation** causing delays and costs to farmers and ranchers trying to improve water distribution and quality. It also imposes unnecessary standards to a process already governed by strict anti-injury and anti-enlargement laws.

We ask you to **vote no on SB 1153**, we already have a water right transfer process that works.

Thank you for considering our testimony,

Tim Deboodt

President, Crook-Wheeler County Farm Bureau