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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3343

I strongly oppose the proposal to mandate water meters on private wells in Oregon, as it represents an unjust intrusion into personal property rights and places an unfair burden on rural residents. Private wells are a lifeline for many Oregonians, particularly in areas where municipal water systems don't reach, and forcing owners to install meters undermines their autonomy over a resource they've responsibly managed for generations.

This policy reeks of government overreach, treating law-abiding citizens like suspects in a water-theft scheme. It assumes guilt without evidence, ignoring that most well owners already conserve water out of necessity and stewardship. The costs of installation, maintenance, and monitoring will hit rural families hardest—people who can least afford another expense amid rising living costs. For what? To feed a bureaucratic data machine that offers no clear benefit to the public good?

Proponents might claim it's about sustainability, but Oregon's water laws already regulate usage through permits and priority dates. Adding meters duplicates oversight while doing nothing to address real issues like corporate over-extraction or urban sprawl. It's a solution looking for a problem, punishing small landowners instead of tackling systemic waste. Plus, the logistics—monitoring thousands of scattered wells—invite inefficiency and errors, wasting taxpayer dollars.

Private wells are not public utilities; they're private property. Forcing meters erodes that distinction, setting a dangerous precedent for state control over other personal resources. I urge Oregon lawmakers to reject this measure and protect the rights of well owners who've sustained themselves without meddling from Salem.

This statement reflects common concerns about property rights, cost, and government overreach, which are frequent points of opposition to such proposals in Oregon and similar states.