

Walla Walla River Irrigation District

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House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair McDonald, and Honorable Members of the Committee. My name is Travis Trumbull and I am the District Manager of the Walla Walla River Irrigation District in Milton Freewater, as well as a Walla Walla 2050 Strategic Plan (Walla Walla 2050) Basin Advisory Committee member representing Oregon Agriculture

The Walla Walla River Irrigation District consists of approximately 2900 acres of orchards, vineyards, pasture and livestock operations. 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. 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. Participating in previous basin planning efforts and now in the Walla Walla 2050 Strategic Plan, we are cognizant of our other basin partner's needs and are committed to working together to help solve the water shortage problems that we all face.

The Walla Walla 2050 Strategic Plan was created collaboratively with the Oregon, Washington, The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, irrigators and other basin stakeholders to provide guidance for water co-management in the Walla Walla Basin. In 2024 Senator Hansell and Representative Levy introduced OR SB 1567. It's subsequent passage along with companion legislation in Washington, created legal, foundational components that recognize, honor and protect long fought efforts that have been made over the prior century but proved futile because of the invisible, yet problematic Stateline.

Building upon this strong foundation, we are grateful for Senator Nash and Representative Levy's continued belief, support and leadership for Walla Walla 2050 Strategic Plan. With that, they have introduced Senate Bill 761. This Bill allows Irrigation Districts in the Walla Walla Basin to be able to reduce their diversion rates at their head-gate and leave water "instream" without the current requirement of fallowing farm land, which is impossible for the perennial crops that are prevalent within our Irrigation District. Senate Bill 761 will prove to be a force-multiplier that will benefit environmental, fishery, Tribal, recreational and farming activities. The benefits of Senate Bill 761, along with the previous passage of OR and WA Legislation stated above, will also be realized across the stateline to our basin partners in Washington.

There has been a tremendous amount of work performed to date and there is still a tremendous amount of work ahead of us. Collaboration and a shared vision of what the future can hold if we all work together will continue to guide our efforts. We can only achieve these goals with your help and support of Senate Bill 761.

Thank you for your consideration

Walla Walla River Irrigation District – Board of Directors