

Submitter: Jennifer Davis
On Behalf Of: SB 1153
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1153

Dear Committee Members,

I originally submitted a text against SB 1153. I am a farmer in the Willamette Valley, and the OFB sent me a letter suggesting I oppose this bill. As a farmer, I know very well how serious water rights and access are. I am seriously concerned about the pressures from CAFOs, huge orchards and huge chemical monocultures on water supplies. I would love to see the OFB really seriously direct their attention to protecting our soil, water and air first, as well as our food safety- rather than the business interests of big conventional agriculture, but sadly in most instances this does not seem to be the case.

After studying this issue further, I oppose SB 1153. I misunderstood the bill as a limiter on water rights transfers. But I recognize now that this bill is about stream and river protections from usurpation by big ag without proper review.

We are facing a serious water crisis in the state resulting in droughts and wildfires out of control. The massive new cuts to our forest protection and environmental bureaus will only exacerbate this. As trees fall, rain stops falling- we know healthy forests and rainfall depend on each other.

Healthy farm soils also help create healthy watersheds as well as protect groundwater supplies. Living soils are like sponges and crops need much less water when soil is properly nourished by cover crops, crop rotations, minimal tillage and very restrained use of chemicals. Our conventional agriculture system, which OFB supports wholeheartedly- is just hastening the death of our soil biomes, which in turn makes crops thirstier and our water supplies more poisoned.

It's time to really protect our wild streams and rivers- without them we don't have healthy forests, and without forests we don't have rain. Science has well demonstrated the significance of healthy forest ecosystems on our rain supply. Farmers need a healthy ecosystem to flourish- not special access to rivers. Farmers need to take responsibility for helping to truly support a healthy and functional water cycle and SB 1153 can help them do that.

Thank you.
J. Davis