

Submitter: Wade Flegel

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1153

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bonham and Committee Members,

I'm reaching out to you with serious concerns about Senate Bill 1153 and what it means for our family farm in Central Oregon. SB 1153 proposes the most sweeping changes to Oregon Water Law in decades without clear evidence of a problem.

THIS BILL IS BAD FOR FAMILY FARMS. Water rights transfers-adaptations used for addressing drought, crop rotation, irrigation improvements, etc - are the only practical option for farmers and ranchers to legally move water where it's needed. SB 1153 puts this tool under attack and threatens our water rights. For example to change from flood irrigation to a pivot irrigation system, which would improve efficiencies in the use of water, could be held up indefinitely because of language and litigations provided for in SB 1153. This could potentially remove water from our farm or other farms in the same situation.

SB 1153 eliminates flexibility, contains vague and unproven standards, blocks innovation, introduces legal uncertainty, adds more burden to an already backlogged system at Oregon Water Resources Department, exempts cities from the same rules that would burden Oregon's family farms and ranches, contains no accountability measures, and is just bad public policy. If this bill is so bad for cities then why is it even being proposed? Oregon's family farms and ranches deserve the same exemption SB 1153 is giving the cities.

SB 1153 is bad for agriculture and it's bad for our community. Please stand up for farmers and ranchers, oppose Senate Bill 1153.

Thank you,
Wade Flegel