

Submitter:	Stephen Demergasso
On Behalf Of:	FARMERS
Committee:	Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	SB1153

1) our farm

we farm irrigated crops in the Willamette Basin. on our farms, we have water at a depth of 15'. this seems to indicate that there is an abundance of water in this part of the state. in the past six years, we have worked with Oregon Water Resources to perfect our water rights on two farm properties. each time we worked thru the appropriate channels and it was a very tedious and time consuming process. the last time we worked with the bureau it took three years to finish the project. however, we worked within the laws to ensure we followed all laws. i say this to say that, oregon farmers are honest and responsible people who follow state law. the water rights transfer that we completed had no impact on habitat for endangered fish. it seems to imagine a real-world example of this fish theory would require quite a bit of creativity to illustrate.

2) bountiful wildlife on our farm

there is a beautiful abundance of wildlife in the willamette river area. huge populations of deer, beaver, turkey, nutria, squirrels, birds, eagles, big cats, and bears. i presume there is plenty of fish as well, although i do not personally fish. the idea that oregon farms are detrimental to these species is wrong. we share the lands with these animal species and live in peaceful coexistence. on our farm, in fact, we maintain the natural habitats of large brush areas and sloughs where these animals live, including fish in the sloughs. we do not maintain the land in this manner because the state government passed a law to require us to do so. we do this because we believe in the stewardship and maintenance of the land.

3) "the public owns the water"

the statement that "the public owns the water" is not entirely true. farmers hold water rights which would presumably give them "ownership" over use of that water, which would mean that "the public" does not in fact "own" this water. please really do think about the previous statement. the narrative being created when legislators repeatedly say "the public owns the water" completely overlooks the water rights owned by farmers. in a legal sense, Oregon farmers own their water because we own these water rights. statements to the contrary are false and create a false narrative, and this false narrative leaves the door open for the state to usurp more power and layer more laws on farmers in the manner that this bill is doing.

4) "building pace and pressure on our water resources"

the governor's assistant testifying in support of this piece of legislation gave a talking point to the effect of - "the building pace and pressures on our water resources". the

water level and flow in our area of the Willamette Basis has been the exact same for generations. as this bill impacts the entire state, i would kindly request the gentleman to be mroe precise in terms of \*where\* is is talking about. in fact, maybe a more targeted piece of legislation is better. a blanket bill making all water rights transfers more challenging, transferes which already take years to complete, and no issues are proven, is unnecessarily detrimental and tedious to farmers who are already maintaining their land.