

Submitter: Donna Harris

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4006

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, members of the Committee:

I urge you to oppose HB 4006. Oregon's water belongs to the public. Exempting irrigators in one area of the state from important water laws that every other farmer in Oregon must adhere to is not good for the Columbia River, the Umatilla Basin, or our state.

This bill undermines the Oregon Water Resources Department's ability to manage over 700,000 acres of irrigated agriculture, and sets a dangerous precedent.

I am also concerned about the effect of increased agriculture on the groundwater quality of the Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area, as increased irrigation risks increased nitrate inputs into groundwater. The public in Oregon has been reading about the severe threats to groundwater contamination in this basin for years. Why would one ignore these studies ? Would you yourself choose to drink well water existing in the affected areas of the nitrate contaminated water? In central Oregon we have been aware of nitrate contamination of groundwater in southern Deschutes Co. from old inefficient septic systems where groundwater depth is shallow causing cross contamination with drinking water. Both issues where nitrates can be detrimental to humans and especially babies' health, must be finally addressed.

Please oppose this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony