

State Representative
Cliff Bentz
House District 60

PRESS RELEASE: March 17, 2017

CONTACT: Representative Cliff Bentz
503-986-1460



Rep. Bentz Calls For Comment On Proposed Water Management Fee and Water Measurement Bills

SALEM—In response to a series of articles appearing in the Oregonian Newspaper last summer, Rep. Ken Helm (D-Portland), Chair of the House Energy & Environment Committee, has introduced and will hear on Wednesday, March 22, three water-related bills. House Bill 2705 would require measurement and annual reporting of all diversions of water after 2020; HB 2706 would impose an annual \$100 “management fee” on each water right certificate, permit, decree, or groundwater registration; and HB 2707 would appropriate general fund dollars for ground water investigation and study.

Said Rep. Bentz, “The concern that has lead Rep. Helm to bring these bills, that Oregon is suffering from a shortage of water, is shared by many of us. Sadly, two of these bills (HB 2705 and HB 2706) as currently drafted, do little to help and a lot to increase water user’s costs. Installation of measuring devices on streams can cost tens of thousands of dollars, and daily maintenance can add up to thousands of dollars in additional labor costs. The reporting, at least annually (and more often if the Oregon Water Resources Department so requests), of “water amount, rate, and duty” will add more thousands of dollars, annually, in time and additional out-of-pocket expense. The inclusion of a \$500 civil penalty for each day of violation of the act, creates the threat of financial disaster for those who make innocent errors made while trying to comply with the reporting requirements in the HB 2705 because those errors might not be discovered for months after the reports are filed.”

“I strongly suggest that those who have water rights email, write, or call, the members of the Energy & Environment Committee to share their thoughts and suggestions. If possible, attend the hearing on the 22nd of March, in Salem (900 Court St. NE, Hearing Room-D), at 3:00 p.m. (PDT).”

House Bill 2707 would, if funded, provide money for additional ground water studies and evaluation. There is a need for this type of work, but the state’s budget, this year is dramatically limited because of legacy PERS costs, overly optimistic extension of Medicaid, passage of Ballot Measures without concurrent funding, and other government programs too numerous to list here. These budget constraints suggest that funding for this bill is unlikely to be found.

Copies of these bills can be found on the Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) at:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Measures/Overview/HB2705>

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Measures/Overview/HB2706>

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Measures/Overview/HB2707>

Written testimony can be submitted prior to the hearing at: hee.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov.

Contact information for the Energy & Environment Committee members can be found at:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Committees/HEE/Overview>.

###