



Representative Greg Smith

Proudly Serving Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, Sherman and Portions of Wasco Counties

For Immediate Release
July 2, 2013

Contact
Rep. Smith (503) 986-1457
Rep. Jenson (503) 986-1458

Smith, Jenson Advance Umatilla Water Bill

SALEM – Today [Representative Greg Smith \(R-Heppner\)](#) and [Representative Bob Jenson \(R-Jenson\)](#) helped pass a significant water bill aimed at developing water infrastructure in the Umatilla Basin through the Joint Ways and Means Budget Committee.

[Senate Bill 839](#) establishes a Water Supply Development account to make loans and grants available for water conservation, reuse and storage projects. The bill would also establish two task forces to review and make recommendations on the structure of the loan and grants, the needs of watersheds for seasonally varying flows and financial feasibility of new water storage projects.

“These bills represent good public policy and provide tremendous benefits to our constituents. It was an honor being able to advance them through the legislative process,” said Rep. Smith.

“The current water crisis in areas of Oregon demonstrates the need for timely solutions to issues involving the utilization of this important resource,” said Rep. Jenson. “I’m glad to be part of the team that worked so hard to pass these common sense proposals.”

“Senate Bill 839 will provide a tool in growing the water dependent, agricultural based industries in our area. This would mean more jobs for our ever growing community, and allow our region to continue playing a vital role in the state’s economy. Thank you Rep. Smith for your hard work,” said **Debbie Pedro, Hermiston Chamber of Commerce.**

Steve Eldrige, General Manager & CEO of Umatilla Electric Cooperative said, “Senate Bill 839 provides another opportunity for new water storage projects necessary to support economic stability and continued growth of the Columbia River Basin. We thank Representative Smith for his support on this bill and other issues important to our economy.”

In addition to SB 839, Rep. Smith is working on SB 5533, which would allocate \$10 million to the Water Supply Development account Created in SB 839.

“We have participated in great discussions with the Governor to address the critical water needs of the Columbia River Basin. Representative Smith’s leadership to advance this conversation has been critical to our success,” said **Gary Neal, General Manager at the Port of Morrow.**

From here, SB 839 heads to the Senate and House for a vote.

####