



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Water Resources Department

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Racquel Rancier, Senior Policy Coordinator

SUBJECT: Agenda Item K, March 13, 2015
Water Resources Commission Meeting

Legislative Update

I. Introduction

The 2015 Oregon Legislative Session began on Monday, February 2, 2015. During this agenda item, staff will provide an overview of the legislative session and key legislative issues.

II. Background

On January 12-14, the Oregon Legislature convened during Organizational Days to swear in new members, announce committees, and introduce pre-session filed bills. With the addition of new members, Democrats now control the House (35-25) and the Senate (18-12). Fourteen-hundred and thirty-three bills were introduced during Organizational Days.

III. Committee Membership

The water-related bills have been assigned to the House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water and the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. Committee membership is outlined below:

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

- Chris Edwards, Chair (D)
- Alan Olsen, Vice-Chair (R)
- Michael Dembrow (D)
- Chuck Thomsen (R)
- Floyd Prozanski (D)

House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water

- Brian Clem, Chair (D)
- Mike McLane (R)
- Vic Gilliam (R)
- David Gomberg (D)
- Ken Helm, Vice Chair (D)
- Bill Post, Vice Chair (R)
- Brad Witt (D)

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

- Sen. Richard Devlin, Co-Chair (D)
- Rep. Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair (D)
- Sen. Michael Dembrow (D)
- Sen. Bill Hansell (R)
- Rep. Brian Clem (D)
- Rep. Jodi Hack (R)
- Rep. David Gomberg (D)
- Rep. Julie Parrish (R)

IV. Department Legislation

SB 266 – Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning

IWRS Recommended Actions # 9A, 9B, 9C

Place-based integrated water resources planning will allow communities and stakeholders, in partnership with the state, to understand their instream and out-of-stream water resources needs, and then identify solutions and potential projects in order to meet those needs now and into the future. This bill authorizes the Department to provide grants to groups seeking to undertake a voluntary, place-based approach to water resources planning. The grants would provide communities with the initial financial capacity to cover facilitation, logistical, and technical costs associated with undertaking a place-based process.

SB 267 – Extending Irrigation District Pilot Project Allowing Temporary Transfers within Boundaries

The intent of the pilot project is to look for ways to provide increased flexibility for irrigation districts to temporarily change the place of use of water rights without reducing protections for existing water users. This bill extends the sunset on the pilot program to January 2, 2022, which will allow the program to continue in order to further assess its implementation. This bill builds on prior efforts of the Water Resources Commission to stabilize or increase Department funding by establishing a task force to identify and recommend solutions.

SB 268 – Water Resources Department Funding Task Force

IWRS Recommended Actions # 13B

The Department is heavily reliant on general fund for its operations. In the past, the variability of, and competition over, the General Fund has eroded the capacity of the Water Resources Department to manage, distribute, and protect Oregon's water resources, particularly since workload and complexity of issues has increased.

SB 264 – Implementation of the Upper Klamath Basin Comprehensive Agreement

IWRS Recommended Actions # 2C, 9C

The 2014 Upper Klamath Basin Comprehensive Agreement requires the state to seek legislation that would authorize the Klamath County Circuit Court to undertake procedures in the Klamath Basin Adjudication that would allow non-tribal claims to move forward, while tribal water right claims are adjudicated in a timeline and manner to facilitate implementation of the agreement. This bill also authorizes the Department to participate as a voting member of the Joint Management Entity, which is responsible for administration of certain provisions of the Comprehensive Agreement.

***SB 265 – Fulfilling State Commitments in the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement
IWRS Recommended Actions # 2C, 9C***

As signatory to the 2010 Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement, which settles key disputes over water in the Klamath Basin, the State of Oregon has committed to support legislative authorization to compensate Klamath County for potential economic losses, and to provide grants for agricultural energy and water conservation projects.

V. Other Legislation

Staff will provide an overview of other legislation that has been introduced.

VI. Conclusion

The deadline for bills to make it out of their first chamber committee is April 21, and the second chamber deadlines for bills is June 5. The target Sine Die for session to end is June 26.

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