



## Oregon Water Resources Congress

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December 10, 2014

Dear [Oregon Congressional Member]:

On behalf of the Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC), I am writing to express our strong support of S. 2379, the *Klamath Basin Water Recovery and Economic Restoration Act of 2014*, and urge you to support this important legislation as well. S. 2379 provides the federal authorities needed for the implementation of three hard-fought settlement agreements—the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement, the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement, and the Upper Basin Comprehensive Agreement. We are in favor of S. 2379, and the three settlement package itself, because they provide clear workable solutions for the challenges facing irrigated agriculture, and can serve as a model for collaborative problem-solving that can be applied nationwide.

OWRC is a nonprofit association representing irrigation districts, water control districts, improvement districts, drainage districts and other local government entities delivering agricultural water supplies, including four members in the Klamath Basin. The water stewards we represent operate complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower production, and deliver water to roughly one-third of all irrigated land in Oregon. OWRC has been promoting the protection and use of water rights and the wise stewardship of water resources on behalf of agricultural water suppliers for over 100 years.

Our members from throughout Oregon face challenges related to irrigation water supply reliability, which is so vital to the agricultural industry and our nation's economy. While there are common concerns and interests throughout irrigated agriculture, each basin is unique, and necessitates that local communities' work together to identify their needs and develop solutions to best meet them. In the Klamath Basin, an extraordinary collection of stakeholders, including members of OWRC, worked very hard to collaborate with one another and address all the important interests to provide the stability the Basin so desperately needs. Not long ago, this would have been considered impossible; however, the local community persevered and today a viable solution in S. 2379 is before Congress. The package of agreements is structured to protect irrigated agriculture as well as the environment over the long-term. In isolation, some aspects of the package may be difficult for individual parties or for members of Congress, but the agreements in sum represent many years of difficult negotiation and reflect the diverse needs of the Klamath Basin.

If S. 2379 is not passed, the years of arduous negotiations will be for naught as the agreements will expire and the Basin will be left with further conflict and litigation. Please do not let a few dissenting voices prevent the progression of a feasible solution that will allow the Basin to move past arguing and towards positive action. In light of these negative consequences if the settlement packages are not authorized, OWRC would like to encourage all members of Oregon's Congressional delegation to join together to prevent further conflict, support S. 2379, and help the Klamath Basin take an important step forward. We commend all the parties for their hard work and respectfully request that you support this effort by enacting legislation to advance the three agreements.

Sincerely,

April Snell  
Executive Director

***The mission of the Oregon Water Resources Congress is to promote the protection and use of water rights and the wise stewardship of water resources.***