HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER

February 2, 2005 Hearing Room 357

1:00 PM Tapes 18 - 20

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Rep. Bob Jenson, Chair**

Rep. Jerry Krummel, Vice-Chair

Rep. Jackie Dingfelder, Vice-Chair

Rep. Phil Barnhart

Rep. Alan Brown

Rep. Billy Dalto

Rep. Mike Schaufler

STAFF PRESENT: **Sandy Thiele-Cirka, Committee Administrator**

Pamella Andersen, Committee Assistant

MEASURES/ISSUES HEARD:

Informational Meeting

Critical Groundwater Task Force Presentation

Umatilla Basin Groundwater Update

Department of Environmental Quality

Trend Analysis of Food Processor Land Application Sites in the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area **Report**

Groundwater Quality in Oregon **Report**

These minutes are in compliance with Senate and House Rules. <u>Only text enclosed in quotation marks reports a speaker's exact words.</u> For complete contents, please refer to the tapes.

TAPE/#	Speaker	Comments
TAPE 18, A		
004	Chair Jenson	Opens the meeting at 1:03 p.m. Opens the informational meeting on the Umatilla Basin Groundwater Update.
<u>UMATILLA BASIN GROUNDWATER UPDATE – INFORMATIONAL MEETING</u>		
015	Phil Ward	Director, Water Resources Department (WRD). Reviews status and management of groundwater resources in Oregon.
033	Barry Norris	Manager, Technical Services Division; State Water Engineer, WRD. Submits presentation materials **(EXHIBIT A)** and begins presentation on groundwater. Discusses management of groundwater.
098	Doug Woodcock	Manager, Groundwater Hydrology Section, WRD. Continues presentation **(EXHIBIT A)** on studies on groundwater.
121	Norris	Mentions funding issues.
130	Woodcock	Describes smaller investigations. Explains Columbia Basin basalts.
175	Chair Jenson	Comments on Columbia River basin north side vineyards. Questions if that is tied to groundwater basalt.
185	Woodcock	States that he unsure of the source of water on the north side.
188	Chair Jenson	Explains that water has been denied to farmers on the south side.
197	Norris	Suggests that investment by corporations allowed vineyards to start.
213	Woodcock	Continues presentation on hydrogeologic units.

238	Rep. Schaufler	Questions whether there has been a negative impact in groundwater resources in the Deschutes Basin.
250	Woodcock	Relates that there have not been declines in Deschutes as there have been in Clackamas. Continues presentation on wells and water supply problems, particularly in the Columbia River basalts.
350	Rep. Schaufler	Questions how typical the decline is in the Silverton well.
355	Woodcock	Replies that water is for domestic use in this area and explains declines.
375	Rep. Barnhart	Questions how water supplies are recharged.

TAPE 19, A

005	Woodcock	Describes how water supplies are recharged.
025	Rep. Barnhart	Seeks clarification regarding the long term solution.
028	Woodcock	Explains how resources can be sustained by stabilizing the source and reducing current use. Presents on basin-fill sediment units.
060	Rep. Barnhart	Questions how low water levels effect structures.
068	Woodcock	States that there is no evidence of land subsidence in this area. Describes extraction.
084	Rep. Dingfelder	Addresses aquifer storage recovery as an option for replenishing the wells and asks for more information.
098	Norris	Mentions the projects that seek to store water underground.
104	Rep. Dingfelder	Addresses challenge of locating surface impoundments and storage opportunities.
111	Woodcock	Continues presentation on the Upper Klamath basin study area. Describes the water bank instituted by the Bureau of Reclamation in 2002. Discusses the Tulle Lake irrigation wells in California.

210	Ward	Interjects that Klamath pumping has been used to take the pressure off the lake and WRD is monitoring and seeking to manage the use.
215	Woodcock	Introduces Groundwater Management Tools.
218	Norris	Reviews five administrative processes that are used to manage groundwater.
260	Woodcock	Presents on Umatilla Basin issues.
315	Chair Jenson	Inquires about limited local recharge and the Echo Meadow project.
317	Woodcock	Explains limited local recharge and artificial recharge projects.
330	Chair Jenson	Clarifies that limited refers to type rather than quantity. Expresses concern about the effectiveness of a more aggressive program for the Umatilla.
340	Norris	Relates that the task force is looking for opportunities and funding for projects to address those types of issues.
360	Chair Jenson	Offers information on the Echo Meadows project.
373	Norris	Remarks that the WRD has been enthusiastic about the Echo Meadows project. Explains issues with the projects' beginning.
410	Rep. Schaufler	Comments on artificial recharge, and asks for a definition.
420	Norris	Clarifies regarding an exchange project for surface water. States that artificial recharge and aquifer storage recovery both mean storing water underground. Briefly describes Echo Meadows project.

TAPE 18, B

031	Woodcock	Continues presentation on Columbia Basin basalt aquifers. Presents on problem areas.
090	Chair Jenson	States that the Critical Groundwater Task Force will present when they are available. Closes informational meeting on the Umatilla

		Basin Groundwater Update. Opens informational meeting by the Department of Environmental Quality.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, DEPARTMENT OF – INFORMATIONAL MEETING

***Groundwater Quality in Oregon* Report**

125	Holly Schroeder	Administrator, Water Quality Division, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Submits written testimony **(EXHIBIT B)** and provides background on groundwater quality. Submits DEQ report on Groundwater Quality in Oregon **(EXHIBIT D)**, DHS-DWP/DEQ Report on Certification Programs for Water and Wastewater System Operators **(EXHIBIT E)**, and DEQ Report on the Willamette Watershed Improvement Trading Act **(EXHIBIT F)**. Discusses various methods for protecting groundwater.
171	Chair Jenson	Questions the numbers and types of septic systems that are acceptable.
181	Schroeder	Presents on the La Pine study that has tested systems, and describes rule revisions. Continues presentation on source water protection program. Addresses concerns about nitrate levels.
250	Chair Jenson	Questions the causes of increased nitrate levels.
252	Schroeder	Explains what causes increased nitrogen levels.
265	Rep. Schaufler	Comments on fee bill to survey water and questions whether surveys would detect nitrogen levels.
275	Schroeder	States that she is not familiar with the fee bill.
279	Rep. Dingfelder	Recalls that the bill funds sanitary surveys.
280	Chair Jenson	Explains the purpose and history of HB 2171.
299	Rep. Schaufler	Questions how nitrogen levels are detected.
305	Schroeder	Describes variety of monitoring resources.

320	Rep. Dingfelder	Comments that there is no requirement for individual well owners to test their wells.
340	Schroeder	Explains action plan and monitoring resources. Continues presentation on septic systems testing projects.
402	Rep. Schaufler	Questions why DEQ is not considering a wastewater treatment plant rather than creating thousands of individual systems.
412	Schroeder	Explains that the National Identification Project is meant to identify how current systems can be used to reduce nitrates.

TAPE 19, B

017	Rep. Schaufler	Comments on difficulty with water systems near septic systems.
023	Rep. Barnhart	Addresses the problems in his district requiring expensive treatment. Suggests discussing long term planning requiring a collection system and a treatment plant.
035	Schroeder	Continues presentation on groundwater management in Northern Malheur County and Lower Umatilla Basin area.
072	Chair Jenson	Requests that DEQ's map be explained in relation to maps that WRD displayed in presentation.
080	Mitch Wolgamott	Water Quality Manager, Eastern Region Office, DEQ. Explains similarities between DEQ maps of the lower part of the Umatilla Basin.
092	Schroeder	Introduces presentation on the water quality trend analysis relating to food processor application sites.

Trend Analysis of Food Processor Land Application Sites in the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area **Report**

100	Wolgamott	Submits written testimony **(EXHIBIT C)**. Describes action plan and five source categories contributing to nitrate problems. Addresses food processor sites.

176	Wolgamott	Describes how permit system is set up. Summarizes bottom line of trend analysis report.
242	Chair Jenson	Questions whether anything can be done to reduce nitrogen loadings.
245	Wolgamott	States that DEQ believes they are reducing loadings and expresses surprise at results of trend analysis.
255	Chair Jenson	Addresses cropping that can be done to reduce nitrogen loadings.
256	Wolgamott	Explains that crops are often planted to absorb nitrates. Continues presentation on food processing plants.
323	Rep. Schaufler	Questions why nitrate levels might be decreasing. Questions if irrigation on property with cattle artificially drives up the nitrate levels.
340	Chair Jenson	Speculates that reusing water is an inherent problem with food processing plants.
372	Rep. Schaufler	Addresses use of wheat to address the problem.
374	Chair Jenson	Believes that the right quantity of the right crops will pull the right quantity of nitrogen out of the soil.
388	Wolgamott	States that there must be balance between the nitrates put in the soil and the ability to pull the right amounts out.
400	Chair Jenson	Comments on carefully monitored fertilizer.

TAPE 20, A

013	Wolgamott	Offers his opinion that the largest factor for reducing nitrate levels is promoting storage of wastewater for flexibility when they apply it.
020	Chair Jenson	Questions whether storage is a problem.
024	Wolgamott	Responds that seepage is a concern, and the expense of building a storage facility.

029	Chair Jenson	Mentions companies required to build a holding tank.
035	Wolgamott	Describes permit process to limit the application of the wastewater, so they cannot apply above certain loadings of nitrogen and water.
045	Chair Jenson	Comments on recent notices of noncompliance resulting in large fines. Notes that there have been some problems.
067	Wolgamott	Describes situation with learning curve in permitting and violations.
080	Chair Jenson	Expresses hope that problem has be resolved to prevent high levels.
095	Schroeder	Relates intent to bring all parties together to improve situation.
111	Chair Jenson	Recalls situation where actions of Umatilla army depot caused problems in the soils.
122	Rep. Barnhart	Inquires about ways to remove nitrates from drinking water. Questions if primary source of nitrates must assist in cost of treatment systems.
134	Wolgamott	Responds that there are ways to remove nitrates, including public education, reverse osmosis, and filters. Mentions financial assistance.
161	Schroeder	States that there is currently no program to require the owner of the source to assist.
168	Rep. Schaufler	Questions how efficient the filtration systems are at removing nitrates and fluoride from drinking water.
172	Wolgamott	Responds that systems are efficient at removing nitrate. States that reverse osmosis removes many things, as well.
188	Chair Jenson	Closes the informational meeting and adjourns the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

EXHIBIT SUMMARY

A. **Groundwater, presentation materials, Barry Norris, 16 pp**
B. **Groundwater Protection, written testimony, Holly Schroeder, 6 pp**
C. **Water Quality Trend Analysis, written testimony, Mitch Wolgamott, 5 pp**
D. **Groundwater Quality, DEQ report, Holly Schroeder, 23 pp**
E. **Water Certification Programs, report, Holly Schroeder, 13 pp**
F. **Willamette Watershed Improvement Trading Act, report, Holly Schroeder, 3 pp**