

DWAYNE YUNKER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 3



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 13, 2024

Ms. Laura Hartt
Water Policy Analyst
Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer St NE, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Groundwater Allocation Rulemaking Public Comment

Dear Ms. Hartt:

I am writing to submit into the record a public comment on the Oregon Water Resources Department's Groundwater Allocation Rulemaking proposal.

I have reviewed the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking dated Feb. 22, 2024 on the Department's website. I am deeply concerned that the new rules, if implemented, will be overly restrictive with respect to issuing new groundwater permits in the state of Oregon.

Before changes to groundwater allocation rules are made, it is important to consider the current environment we face with respect to housing availability in the state of Oregon. The governor is working to address Oregon's severe housing shortages. As a state representative and also in my professional capacity as a real estate broker in Grants Pass, I know placing additional restrictions on groundwater permits for new developments could make it challenging to meet our goals for new homes, especially in Oregon's rural areas.

Oregon's current housing crisis makes getting the science right on evaluating interference with surface water sources very important. I believe more study in this area is crucial before rule changes are made. I would suggest the Department take a second look at how other states with climates similar to Oregon's conduct their evaluations.

I strongly encourage the Department to pause the groundwater allocation rulemaking process to allow for additional time to develop more scientifically based methods for evaluating interference with surface water sources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dwayne Yunker". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Representative Dwayne Yunker