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TO: OWRD; WRD\_DL\_rule-coordinator@water.oregon.gov

FROM: Marilyn Tate Koenitzer; 20856 Bobwhite Ct; Bend OR 97701; [mltknows@gmail.com](mailto:mltknows@gmail.com)

RE: GROUNDWATER RULE MAKING - APPROVE

I commend you for suspending water permit approvals for new wells without proof of adequate water to sustain the well. Also for going through this process of groundwater investigation and rulemaking. At last!

I have lived in Oregon almost all my adult life, 45 years in Corvallis, and two in Bend. In Corvallis, where few were concerned about availability of water, there was concern in rural areas about lack of groundwater. One of those places was on the southwest side of the urban growth boundary near me. People living there were finally able to get water when the area was annexed. Several large areas in South and Southwest Corvallis had to be annexed due to health hazards and/or lack of water. As you know, Corvallis gets its water from the Willamette River and the Rock Creek Watershed, not from wells. In summer, when El Nino years occurred, the Willamette water level was so low that it stank with the smell of rotting algae. Our home water filter turned green. Even though our household had enough city water, I occasionally was uneasy about the reliability of both sources.

In the city of Bend now, I am very concerned about the declining water from all sources. All these years I have been heavily involved in environmental issues as a volunteer with environmental organizations. I've been studying water issues in Bend for two years.

In Central Oregon we are all drinking from essentially the same pool of water with thousands of different sized straws. Even though we don't know the size of the pool, we do know the rate of recharge in the Cascades aquifers if we get rain or snow. That's the big if! With climate change, predictions are just that, but seem to be tending toward less water. At the same time Central Oregon is rapidly adding humans.

Oregon's Land Use Goals do not tie growth approvals to water availability. We have to change that, and soon. Bend is one of the fastest growing cities in the US. That is not likely to stop with full coverage in major US newspapers, such as the Washington Post last year, touting the wonders of the Bend area. Redmond is looking to expand and has been denied a permit to drill a new well. We shall see if that holds. The other smaller cities to the north are growing as well as bedroom communities to Bend.

Still, Oregon allows exempt wells to pump 15,000 gallons of water per day without metering to know how much is being used. Or for what. So far we aren't able to lessen over-appropriated water rights or water wasted by rights holders to comply with outdated regulations on usage. People flood rocks or lawns to comply. Not to mention golf courses in the desert. A lot of water is wasted to comply with outdated regulations. About 1,000 wells have gone dry in Deschutes County this year! I have heard well drilling charges of \$100,000.

- I am in full agreement with OWRD rule updates that address new well permit applications while protecting the water rights of existing users. Contrary to some

beliefs, the proposed rules will not take all water from farmers in this desert, but assure that new permits will not harm the aquifers or existing users.

- I support the metrics for groundwater sustainability as identified in your proposed rules.
- I agree that permits should not be granted in situations where data do not exist to support a sustainable aquifer.
- I agree that you should correlate groundwater and surface water to preserve waterways and all life that depends on our rivers.
- The established correlation between ground and surface water must be considered in all decisions that affect water usage and allocation in order to preserve waterways and all life that depends on our rivers. I know that your current rulemaking applies only to new groundwater permits. Oregon must, however, address other pressing issues, including entrenched water rights, lack of metering of unpermitted wells, wasted irrigation water, and lack of land use planning tied to water availability.

Again, thank you for your bold first steps in revamping the well permitting process to protect our declining, vital groundwater.

MTK