

GREG WALDEN
SECOND DISTRICT, OREGON

ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEES:
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
CHAIRMAN

E-MAIL VIA WEBSITE:
<http://walden.house.gov>



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE:
2185 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3702
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-6730

DISTRICT OFFICES:
14 N CENTRAL AVENUE, SUITE 112
MEDFORD, OR 97501
TELEPHONE: (541) 776-4646
TOLL FREE: (800) 533-3303

1051 NW BOND STREET, SUITE 400
BEND, OR 97701
TELEPHONE: (541) 389-4408

1211 WASHINGTON AVENUE
LA GRANDE, OR 97850
TELEPHONE: (541) 624-2400

June 5, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

Family farms in the Klamath Basin of Oregon and California have faced uncertainty in their water supply for decades due to burdensome federal regulations from multiple agencies that favor fish over farmers. Upper Klamath Lake covers an area three times the size of Manhattan, but most of the water is managed for fish, leaving farmers as the last in line to receive water in droughts like they face this year. Farmers have done their part over the years, reducing water usage, improving access to fish habitat, and more, yet they get little credit for their efforts. They are getting a raw deal, but it doesn't have to be that way. With your help in convening a multi-agency task force to look at the competing issues across the Klamath Basin, we can find a solution that provides water certainty to our family farms and ranches.

This issue is something I and others in the Klamath Basin have worked on tirelessly for more than two decades. Over the years, we've put fish screens in canals, we've removed the Chiloquin Dam to improve access to fish spawning habitat. We've provided funding and taken land out of production. We've talked to scientists. We've done just about all there is we can do. And yet the government and courts always tell us it is not enough. Science shows that the plans and government regulations are just not working. Farmers are worse off than before. And fish populations are not improving. No one seems to know how many fish there are, how many there were, or how many there should be. We must do better. We need a fresh look at this whole system, and you can help accomplish that.

Farmers in Oregon and Northern California have had enough. Last week, I attended a rally in Klamath Falls where thousands of fed up farmers, ranchers and their neighbors showed up and took a stand. A convoy of roughly 2,200 tractors, combines, trucks and more traveled across the basin in a line that would have stretched across Manhattan from top to bottom. About 4,000 individuals showed up throughout the day to make their support for our farmers and ranchers known. Farmers are the backbone of our great nation. In the West, water is life. Without it we cannot raise the crops we need for our communities to survive economically. We've faced droughts before, but this year things are worse than usual. Crops were planted before water allocations were reduced as farmers watched water released to help salmon downstream flow past dying crops.

I know you and your administration care greatly about America's farmers and ranchers and you can help solve this decades old problem. I encourage you to convene a multi-agency task force, including the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture, to collaborate and find a solution. It would be highly beneficial to bring together the right people within your administration at a summit in Oregon and find a path to water certainty for farmers and ranchers in the basin. We can't wait another two decades to make positive change. We need it right now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Walden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Congressman Greg Walden
Oregon's Second Congressional District

cc: Secretary David Bernhardt, Department of Interior