



Summary of Legislative Concept 661 (2013)

LC 661 Extend OWRD's Transaction Fee Schedule – Remove Sunset

Goal

Ensure adequate cost recovery for the services OWRD provides to its customers.

Background

The Department's fees for all water right transactions are set in statute. Last modified in 2009, the current fees are scheduled to sunset in 2013. If this occurs, fees will revert back to 2003 levels. The current fee schedule supports approximately \$2.1 million worth of work, or 16 permit and transfer staff in the Water Rights Division. A roll-back to 2003 levels would decrease authorized funding levels and staff by 7 FTE.

Proposal

This legislative concept:

- (1) Removes the sunset on the Department's fee schedule,
- (2) Adjusts additional fees, to bring consistency to the overall fee schedule, and
- (3) Also adjusts the current schedule of fees to account for the increased cost of doing business; these increased costs, set each biennium by the Oregon Department of Administrative Services, will be approximately 13 percent higher during 2013-15.

Stakeholder Feedback

Support for partial cost recovery through fees comes from water users across a wide spectrum, including irrigated agriculture, municipalities, counties, and instream interests, who rely on the Water Resources Department to process water right permits, transfers, certificates, and other documents in a timely and accurate fashion.

The Department convened a stakeholder discussion during June 2012 to assess whether the fee levels in this legislative concept were "equitable." Generally, stakeholders believed that they were, but noted a few fee levels that seemed high. The Department subsequently adjusted these downward.

Stakeholders were divided as to whether an estimated 13 percent increase in costs for the 2013-15 biennium was correct and whether it should be reflected in the Department's legislative concept.

Additional Notes

This concept comports with the State's Integrated Water Resources Strategy Recommended Action 13B: "Fund Water Resources Management Activities at the State Level." This concept also relates to WRD budget package #208, which would authorize the receipt of water right transaction fees.

Contact

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OUR MISSION

To serve the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management through two key goals:

- (1) to directly address Oregon's water supply needs, and
- (2) to restore and protect streamflows and watersheds in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of Oregon's ecosystems, economy, and quality of life.