

AGENDA ITEM FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING () Discussion only
(X) Action

FROM (DEPT/ DIVISION): Community Development Department

SUBJECT: Umatilla & Morrow County Joint Letter Requesting Funding for Water Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement Fund (WARRF)

<p>Background: Umatilla and Morrow counties are continually seeking solutions for contaminated wells within the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA). Planning staff from both counties have prepared a letter requesting the Oregon House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water Committee dedicate funding to the state’s Water Well Abandonment, Repair, and Replacement Fund (WARRF). The WARRF program is another resource that local residents could access to mitigate drinking water wells impacted by the high nitrate levels of the LUBGWMA.</p>	<p>Requested Action: Approve Umatilla & Morrow County Joint Letter to Oregon House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water Committee requesting funding for the WARRF and authorize the Chair to sign</p>
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ATTACHMENTS: Draft Request Letter

Date: (02/16/24) Submitted By: Robert Waldher, Community Development Director

*****For Internal Use Only*****

Checkoffs:

- () Dept. Head (copy)
- () Human Resources (copy)
- () Fiscal
- () Legal (copy)
- () (Other - List:)

To be notified of Meeting:
Robert Waldher

Needed at Meeting:
Robert Waldher

Scheduled for meeting on: February 21, 2024

Action taken:

Follow-up:

February 21, 2024



Representative Ken Helm
Oregon House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water Committee
900 Court Street NE, H-490
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Request for Funding - Water Well Abandonment, Repair, and Replacement Fund (WARRF)

Dear Chair Helm,

The Board of County Commissioners from Morrow and Umatilla Counties respectfully request that the legislature consider funding for the Water Well Abandonment, Repair, and Replacement Fund (WARRF). The WARRF program is another resource that local residents could access to mitigate drinking water wells impacted by the high nitrate levels of the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA).

The two counties are currently leading a drinking water investigation project within the LUBGWMA. The project is being funded through a grant from Environmental Protection Agency. The drinking water investigation includes testing and analysis of well data obtained from private wells within the LUBGWMA and an infrastructure alternatives analysis that will explore opportunities for connecting private exempt wells to municipal and/or community drinking water systems. It is recognized that it will not be practical to connect every well within the LUBGWMA to a community system. The WARRF would provide a viable alternative when connection to a community system is not an option for private well owners looking to repair or deepen their wells to mitigate drinking water quality issues.

The impact of high nitrate levels on well water is a growing concern in our region. By allocating sufficient funds to the WARRF, we can expedite the replacement of affected wells in the LUBGWMA, ensuring a safe and sustainable water supply for the residents and businesses in this region.

Morrow and Umatilla Counties urge Oregon House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water Committee to give special consideration to the specific needs of the LUBGWMA when deliberating on the allocation of funds for the WARRF. The well-being of our community members in this area is directly tied to the availability of clean and safe water, and investing in the WARRF is a proactive and responsible step towards securing a reliable water supply for current and future generations in the Lower Umatilla Basin.

Respectfully,

David Sykes, Chair
Morrow County Board of Commissioners

John Shafer, Chair
Umatilla County Board of Commissioners