

US Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee

RE: Commentary from Roger Nicholson on S. 2379, the Klamath Basin Water Recovery and Economic Restoration Act of 2014

My name is Roger Nicholson. I am here speaking for myself and Sprague River Water Resource Foundation and Fort Klamath Critical Habitat Landowners. These groups have a large number of members in the Upper Klamath Basin, representing thousands of irrigated acres.

I, like others, represent and own a ranch which has been in the family for more than 100 years, which is extremely dependent for economic survival on irrigation water. The cattle business is the largest agricultural industry in Klamath County. Klamath County is one of the top counties in the nation for combined cow-calf and stocker feeder numbers. Without irrigation, the cattle business in Klamath County would diminish to a footnote.

The water shutoff experienced last year, financially and emotionally crippled the entire community. A sigh of relief could be detected over the whole community when a diverse group of negotiators, including myself, announced a settlement had been reached.

The Klamath Off-Project Settlement Agreement has brought together factions within the Upper Klamath Basin who for decades have been at odds over the allocation of limited water resources. The allocation agreed to in the Settlement provides for Tribal fishing and hunting resources, as well as agricultural production. The Settlement establishes the common ground for the communities of the Klamath Tribes and the agricultural landowners to reunite and work together to resolve water allocation and habitat condition issues.

In the agricultural community, we are excited to move forward on the implementation of the Settlement. This legislation will provide key authorities for Federal participation in the Settlement.

Thank you for your support of S. 2379, the Klamath Basin Water Recovery and Economic Restoration Act of 2014.