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**For Release Immediately**

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## **Introduced U.S. Senate Energy Bill Includes Key Klamath Measures**

**Klamath Falls, OR** – Yesterday, United States Senators Murkowski (R-AK) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) introduced S. 1460, a revitalization of a broad bipartisan energy and natural resource package that overwhelmingly passed the Senate in 2016 but fell short of being enacted late in the year. Of significant note for interests in the Klamath Basin is the inclusion of a package of measures designed to assist Klamath irrigators that Klamath Water Users Association (KWUA) worked on for more than 6 months with Senators Wyden and Merkley and others in the Senate, and with Rep. Greg Walden and Rep. Doug LaMalfa in the House.

“We were anticipating seeing our provisions in this version of the bill, but you never really know until it’s introduced,” said Brad Kirby, President of KWUA. “These things don’t just happen, they take a tremendous amount of time, effort, persistence and hope.” Kirby added that KWUA never stopped working on these provisions legislatively and that they remain a high priority for the organization.

### **Key Elements of the Amendment**

- Direction to Department of Interior to develop a plan and then to take actions to reduce power costs for irrigation in the Upper Basin
- C-Flume Emergency and Extraordinary Operation and Maintenance (EEOM) designation, intended to save millions of dollars for Project water users
- Authorization for reimbursement of some D Plant pumping costs
- Elimination of need for federal contracts or permits for conveyance of Non-Project water such as groundwater
- Clear and permanent authorization for locally-supported Water Bank activities

### **Congressional Delegation Key**

Senators Merkley and Wyden introduced the same measures as an amendment to the 2016 version of the Energy Bill in February, 2016, and received invaluable support from California Senators Dianne Feinstein (D) and Barbara Boxer (D). Congressman Greg Walden actively engaged to help Senate Republicans understand the importance of the amendment and secure their support. Scott White, Executive Director of KWUA noted that support and assistance from the leadership of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee was also critical. “They were extremely engaged in our issues last year and remain that way with this version as well,” said White. “We are very grateful.” White and Kirby emphasized their appreciation for Senators Wyden and Merkley’s continued efforts to secure the Klamath provisions in this year’s bill. “This is just one step toward a larger goal of securing the viability of our family farms and ranches, but it is very important and welcome, and solid foundation for the next steps,” said Kirby.

## **Passage on a Fast Track**

Senators Murkowski and Cantwell have implied that they hope the bill would be placed directly on the Senate floor without going through a Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee hearing. “There are not many changes from the 2016 version of this bill,” said White. “Everything in it was vetted last year and passed the Senate with flying colors. I don’t have any reason to think the mood has changed on this.”

KWUA is a non-profit private corporation that has represented Klamath Reclamation Project farmers and ranchers in its current form since 1953. The Association’s membership includes rural and suburban irrigation districts, other public and private entities and individuals who operate on both sides of the California-Oregon border. These entities and individuals typically hold water delivery contracts with the United States Bureau of Reclamation and deliver water to over 1200 family farms and ranches encompassing more than 170,000 acres.

### **For more information:**

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