

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LANE COUNTY

Platform Committee

9/15/2021

RESOLUTION 2021.12

A resolution of the Democratic Party of Lane County

Regarding water rights

WHEREAS, An average person can only survive without water for a few days; and

WHEREAS, Access to water is vital to agriculture and rural communities; and

WHEREAS, Since 2010, the UN has recognized access to clean and safe drinking water as a basic human right that is *“essential to the full enjoyment of life and all other human rights”*; and

WHEREAS, Commodifying water by creating a “free market” for water rights will drive the price of water beyond the reach of many people, exacerbating inequalities and benefitting only the private investors and traders who speculate in the value and reap profit from every transaction; and

WHEREAS, The creation of a “water marketplace” opens the door to the same speculative and at times quasi-legal trading in futures, options, derivatives, and the like that has caused the boom-and-bust cycles in electrical energy and other commodity markets, generating billions in profit to investors at the expense of those who need water; and

WHEREAS, For an example of commodifying one of life’s necessities, Texas, which has a largely unregulated open market for electricity, recently suffered severe freezing weather and storm activity, creating huge demand for electricity to heat homes and

pump water, which resulted in dramatic increases in electricity rates from a typical seasonal average of \$50 per megawatt-hour to \$9,000 per megawatt hour, robbing customers of their life savings and pushing some to bankruptcy, and potentially forcing a bailout that would cost taxpayers billions while the shareholders will walk away with their profits; and

WHEREAS, Water speculators are already eyeing the Colorado River basin and the Columbia River basin as examples of areas with “undervalued” water that could be sold to drier weather areas at huge profit;

THEREFORE, the Democratic Party of Lane County resolves:

SECTION 1: That we oppose the commodification of water rights; and

SECTION 2: That we strongly advocate for state and federal legislation that will ban speculative trading in water rights.