

1. Do you believe the statutory processes already in place are stringent enough to guide rezones of forest lands, and why or why not?

Measure 14-15 does not involve re-zoning of forestlands. Because the county currently has no codes or ordinances to protect water supplies, Measure 14-15 will improve the chances that the forestlands where our water comes from will continue to provide reliable water supplies for farms and safe drinking water. Measure 14-15 does not try to zone or re-zone anything.

We urge everyone to read the short text of Measure 14-15 at our website – www.itsyourwater.org and see for yourself. Measure 14-15 is a common sense measure that will help protect our water supplies.

Measure 14-15 gives our community an important way to have a say in whether a major new housing project planned for our county's forestland watersheds are worth the potential costs to agriculture and our drinking water supplies.

The purpose of Measure 14-15, the Forestland Water Measure, is to help ensure reliable water supplies for Hood River County farms and to protect the quality of our drinking water. Without good water supplies our ability to attract new jobs to the county will be compromised. Some have argued we should just trust elected politicians to protect our water supplies, but to date there has been no evidence of that protection.

2. What do you believe the legal ramifications, if any, will be if the citizen initiative passes?

Claims by a few individuals that a court may overturn the public's right to be involved in key decisions affecting our water supply are contrary to a number of recent court decisions by the Oregon Supreme Court and the Oregon Court of Appeals and not much more than empty political rhetoric. These claims are an unfortunate scare tactic that are intended to detract from the real issue which is whether the public should have a say on major housing projects that could threaten our water supplies.

Most people are aware that Oregon's Constitution gives Oregonians the right to be directly involved in important decisions affecting our lives through the initiative process. While the initiative process is far from perfect, Measure 14-15 gives our community an important opportunity to be directly involved when it comes to a decision that could have significant effects on the quality of water that we drink and the economic future of Hood River County.

3. If a forest development that would lie outside of a designated watershed is approved by the county please explain why you believe the issue should or should not still be referred to the voters?

Since only Crystal Springs and Oak Grove of the seven community watersheds have been mapped and certified by the state it is not possible to tell whether a forest development would be in or out of a watershed. Until they ALL are mapped, certified and protected from development by county ordinance or code, Measure 14-15 will offer some protection.

It is important to recognize that Measure 14-15 only applies to zoned forestlands where major housing developments are not generally even allowed under county law. If the county tried to bend these general rules, however, and allow a housing development of more than 25 units, Measure 14-15 would give our community the chance to consider whether the potential impacts on water supplies are worth the benefits.

Finally, Mount Hood and all of the designated forestlands in the county supply the water to the springs that orchards, farms and families rely on for their water. Until ALL of the forestland watersheds have gone through the process of mapping and state certification and are protected from development by county codes and ordinances, our community deserves the right to have a voice regarding the future of OUR water supplies.