



***Olympia, Washington***

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## **Columbia basin surface water bill signed by governor**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, April 14, 2011

Legislation sponsored by [Rep. Judy Warnick](#) to ensure deep well irrigators get correct water supplies when converting from wells to Columbia Basin Project water supplies was signed into law today.

[House Bill 1391](#) would assure that well owners would be entitled to receive the uniform Reclamation water duty without losing their standby groundwater right should the Reclamation water supply be interrupted.

"I'm pleased we were able to get this common-sense measure through the Legislature and that the governor agreed we needed to clarify the current statute so we could move ahead with delivery of conserved water to replace deep wells that are drying up," said **Warnick, R-Moses Lake**. "This is one piece of a larger effort to help address the crisis resulting from the decline in the Odessa Aquifer."

Orman Johnson, a Connell farmer and member of the East Columbia Basin Project Irrigation District, attended the bill signing.

"The East Columbia Basin Irrigation District has been working on a number of conservation projects that will make additional water available to supply the deep well area, now that the law is clear the board can move ahead with the process of getting this water on the ground," Johnson said. "The District's Board appreciates Rep. Warnick's ongoing support for the work of the District."

The legislation goes into effect 90 days after the adjournment of session, which is scheduled for April 24.



**Photo caption:** The governor signs House Bill 1391 on April 14. Pictured, from left: Orman Johnson, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District; Gov. Christine Gregoire; Representative Judy Warnick; and Mike Schwisow, Washington State Water Resources Association.

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