

**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Lands and Water
On HB 2647**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

OEC supports HB 2647.

Oregon has seen an increase in the number and severity of harmful algal blooms (HABs). This can be attributed to extended drought, which reduces the amount of water in streams and lakes thereby increasing water stagnation and pollutant concentrations (phosphorus and nitrogen being the primary pollutants associated with HABs). Given the shifts in precipitation patterns associated with climate change, it is likely that we will continue to see low-flows and, consequently, more harmful algal bloom events.

The attention of the state's HAB-related work to date has been primarily on early detection of HAB events, doing public outreach, and protecting public health. These activities focus at or downstream of the harmful algal bloom. HB 2647 will allow DEQ and OHA to look upstream of the HAB, identifying possible triggers for the bloom, including sources of pollutants and specific practices that might lead to HAB events. A better understanding of the triggers for HAB events will help the agencies develop means for identifying and monitoring water bodies prone to harmful algal blooms as well as developing tactics for reducing the occurrence and/or severity of the HAB event.

While Section 4 of the bill calls out OHA and DEQ as the principal agencies involved in this work, OEC expects that they will consult and coordinate with other Oregon agencies (e.g. ODA) as well as incorporate applicable work being done on the federal level and in other states.

OEC is glad to see that the legislature takes this issue seriously, and urges the committee to pass HB 2647.