



CITY OF PORTLAND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



1120 SW Fifth Ave, Suite 613, Portland, Oregon 97204 ■ Mingus Mapps, Commissioner ■ Dawn Uchiyama, Interim Director

February 27, 2023

Representative Helm, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
900 Court Street NE, HR D
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

The City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) strongly urges your support for HB 3125, which would fund Oregon State University researchers to study perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in biosolids. As a local wastewater and stormwater management agency, BES is committed to improving water quality in Oregon and managing our natural resources responsibly. Our wastewater treatment processes recover resources from the water we use in our homes and businesses, helping to keep our community's rivers healthy and creating renewable resources for energy and agriculture. The biosolids produced from our treatment processes are applied to agricultural land, returning beneficial nutrients and valuable organic matter to the soil, as well as providing climate benefits by capturing and storing carbon in the soil. There are strict requirements for biosolids production and application, and we test our biosolids on a daily schedule and monitor wastewater throughout the treatment process to detect any problems. Applying biosolids to farm and ranch land makes the land more productive and is the most cost effective and sustainable use of biosolids.

However, we're faced with the challenge of reducing a range of water quality pollutants that enter our systems every day. Emerging toxic pollutants, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), pose particularly unique challenges because they originate from a multitude of sources and our treatment operations are not designed to remove them. At the same time, information available to date has indicted PFAS sources and concentrations do not require immediate statewide action in Oregon.

Maintaining sustainable biosolids management practices as a partnership between wastewater utilities and agricultural communities has multiple environmental and economic benefits. The study proposed in HB 3125 would deliver the information needed to make sound policy decisions about the future of these practices. The study is a collaboration between Oregon State University, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies (ACWA), local wastewater utilities, and participating farmers. BES is committed to be involved in implementing the actions included in HB 3123 through our membership in ACWA. We value this important effort for the biosolids sector, as well as for overall community quality of life, and support HB 3123 to move this important work forward.

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In summary, The City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services urges you to support House Bill 3123. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dawn Uchiyama

Dawn Uchiyama
Interim Director