



Working with community wastewater treatment and stormwater management agencies across the state to protect Oregon's water quality since 1987

ACWA Biosolids and Recycled Water Committee

February 8, 2024

Representative Ken Helm, Chair

Members, House Committee – Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

RE: Letter of support for HB 4049 – Relating to a study concerning PFAS in biosolids applied to land

Chair Helm and members of the Committee:

As a long serving member of Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies Board, I currently serve as the chair of ACWA's Biosolids and Recycled Water Committee.

To provide context regarding the extent of biosolids land application in Oregon, according to the National Biosolids Data Project, 8% of Oregon's land is considered cropland, and of that, 0.44% of that cropland has municipal biosolids applied to them. For all of the biosolids generated at Oregon treatment facilities, 72% is applied to land, about 40,000 dry tons in 2018. Oregon's biosolids program is regulated and monitored by Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), which aligns with EPA's biosolids regulations, which were established in 1993 to provide standards for management practices, monitoring, and reporting to ensure safe land application of biosolids.

With partnerships between Oregon Clean Water agencies and farmers, and oversight by DEQ, biosolids management programs provide cost effective and environmental benefits by:

- Improving soil condition by increasing soil organic carbon and nutrients
- Increasing water holding capacity, which can reduce irrigation water demand
 - And in turn reduces crop drought stress
 - And furthermore in turn increases crop yields
- Biosolids sequester carbon for long-term storage, helping municipalities do their part toward theirs and Oregon's greenhouse gas reduction goals

Land application is not only cost-effective, but also a sustainable practice by recycling this important organic resource. Alternative practices, including incineration and landfill disposal, do not capture these environmental benefits and they are not sustainable in the long term due to dependence on energy and consumption of landfill space.

It is important to ACWA members and farming partners that we tackle emerging toxics of concern, like PFAS, to ensure that land application practices remain safe. HB 4049 will enable critical research toward better understanding of the pathways of PFAS from biosolids land application programs, which will provide Oregon policy makers with sound and scientific information to further ensure safe programs.

Frank Dick, Engineering Supervisor, City of Vancouver

Oregon ACWA Biosolids and Recycled Water Committee Chair

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