

Good Afternoon Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

Intro

My name is Ron Wierenga; I am the Deputy Director of Clackamas Water Environment Services in Clackamas County. I have also served as a technical and policy lead for the Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies (ACWA) in developing statewide strategies to address PFAS pollution. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 4049 on behalf of our utility and our clean water agency partners throughout Oregon.

WES and Biosolids

Water Environment Services takes wastewater from homes and businesses and makes clean water, electricity and biosolids for beneficial use. Every year we apply about 11,000 tons of biosolids to agricultural lands in Oregon through collaborative partnerships with farmers who value the biosolids as a nutrient-rich soil amendment. Our partnership allows biosolids to be beneficially used rather than wasted in a landfill, and has been a win-win for utilities, farms and soil health for over 40 years.

PFAS Concerns

We closely follow scientific studies and federal regulatory activities around PFAS because our mission is to protect human health and the environment, and because we know we will be called upon to help address this issue. And while agencies like ours are *passive* receivers of PFAS, meaning we do not produce or manufacture these chemicals or use them in the treatment process, we know we must do our part to identify PFAS sources. We endeavor to work with our community and industries to reduce them before they get to the treatment plant because these chemicals don't typically break down in the treatment processes.

Why the Study is needed

PFAS chemicals are now found everywhere, in the air, the water, and on land. We need this Oregon-specific study to better understand where and how these chemicals that may be passed through biosolids are contributing to PFAS levels found in farm soils and crops. Information from this study will help Oregon's wastewater utilities like ours and the farmers we partner with, continue to make well-informed decisions about biosolids and farm management practices.

The Ask

We urge your support for this bill and we are available to answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you.