

# The Lower Umatilla Basin Sacrifice Zone

Pollution, Polluters, People

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OREGON **rural**  
ACTION

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SOWING SEEDS OF **CHANGE**

Zaira Sanchez – Director of Community Organizing  
Kaleb Lay – Director of Policy & Research

# Failure to Uphold State Policy

## To Protect: Water, Air and Public Health

*“Pollution of any of the waters of the state is declared to be **not a reasonable or natural use** of such waters and to be **contrary to the public policy of the State of Oregon.**”*

– ORS 468B.020(1)

*“The most effective and feasible approach to managing widespread groundwater contamination, such as that in the LUBGWMA, is to **control and reduce the sources of pollutants.**”*

– LUBGWMA Nitrate Reduction Plan (9/2024)

*“In the interest of the public health and welfare of the people, it is declared to be the public policy of the State of Oregon... To **restore and maintain the quality of the air** resources of the state **in a condition as free from air pollution as is practicable**, consistent with the overall public welfare of the state.”*

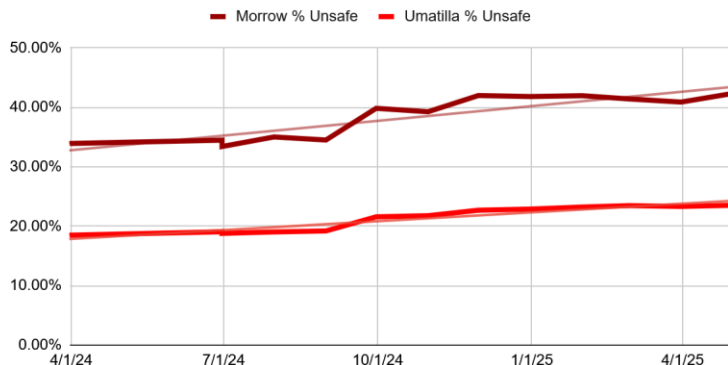
– ORS 468A.010(1)

# Groundwater Pollution - Still Getting Worse

- **2,024** domestic wells tested since 2022 (61.5% of identified wells)
  - Morrow County
    - **42.3%** show **Unsafe** nitrate levels
    - **20.8%** show **At Risk** nitrate levels
  - Umatilla County
    - **23.5%** show **Unsafe** nitrate levels
    - **21.8%** show **At Risk** nitrate levels
- **Well users were not warned for 32+ years** despite agency & polluter awareness of risk

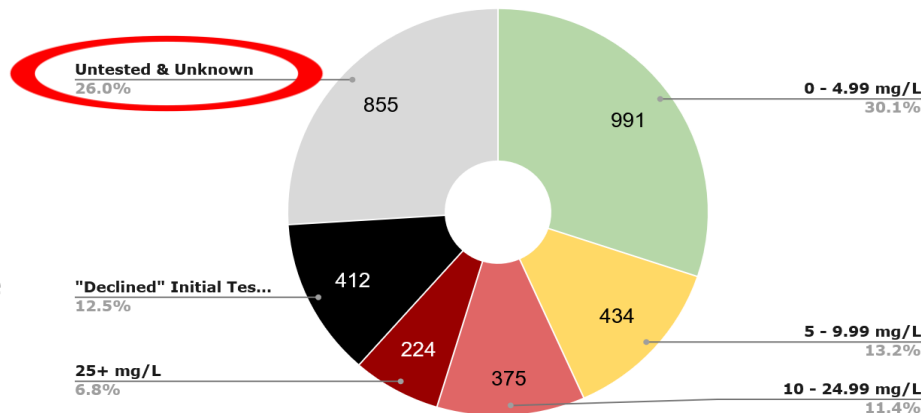
## Share of Wells Testing Unsafe Over Time

Data from Oregon Health Authority Well Testing Program (3/2024 - 5/2025)



## LUBGWMA Well Testing Status

Of the 3,291 Wells "Identified" by OHA - data from 5/5/2025 update

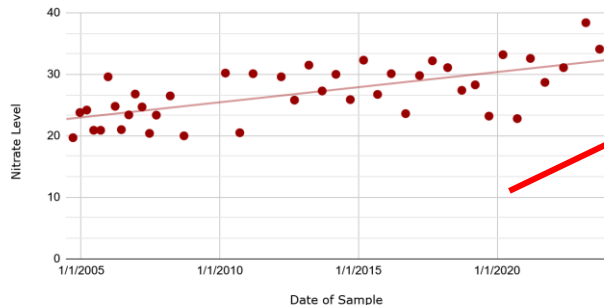


- **Nitrate levels continue to rise Basin-wide**
  - DEQ Trend Analysis (Jan. 2025)
  - OHA well retesting shows more than 1/10 wells went from safe in 2023 to unsafe in 2024 (as of July 2024)
- **Overall rate well contamination continues to rise** as more wells get tested

# Rising Pollution Permitted

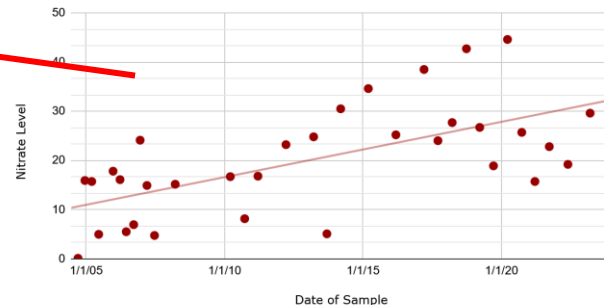
## Threemile Canyon Farms - Threemile Creek (Surface)

Data from TMCF annual report to ODA (1/11/2024)



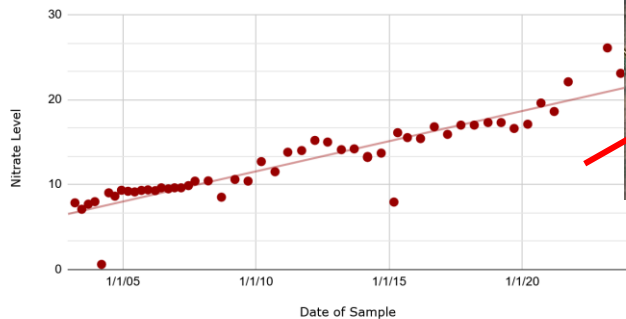
## Threemile Canyon Farms - Sixmile Creek (Surface)

Data from TMCF annual report to ODA (1/11/2024)



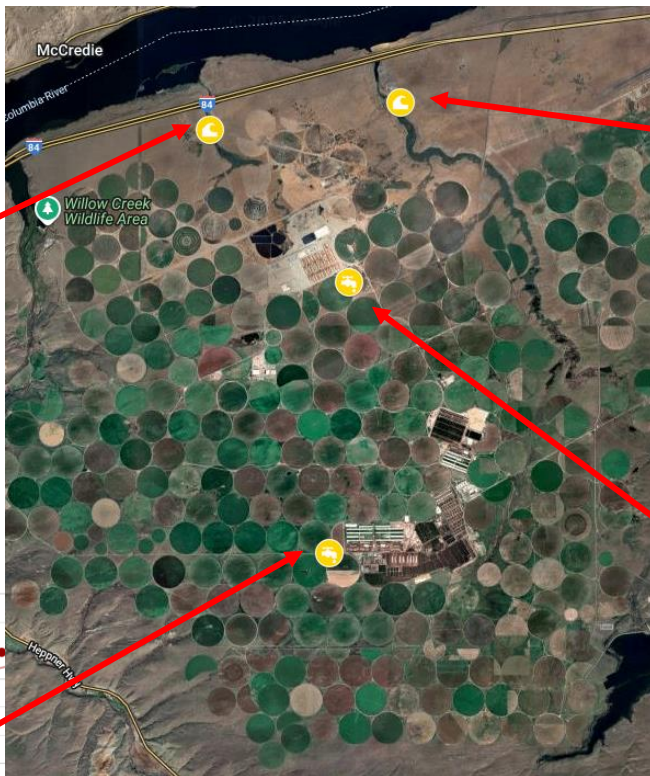
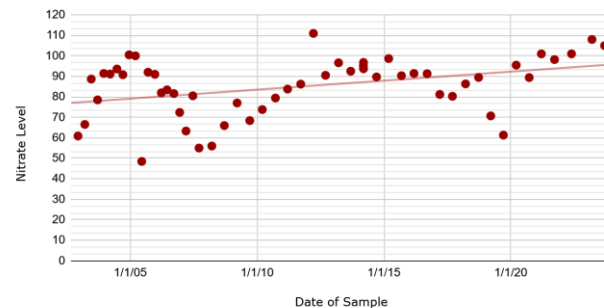
## Threemile Canyon Farms - CWU3 (Groundwater)

Data from TMCF annual report to ODA (1/11/2024)



## Threemile Canyon Farms - MW7 (Groundwater)

Data from TMCF annual report to ODA (1/11/2024)



**Threemile / Beef NW mega-CAFO**  
Permitted for combined 130,954 animals  
TMCF opened 2001 post-GWMA declaration

# Air Pollution – Disproportionate Burden

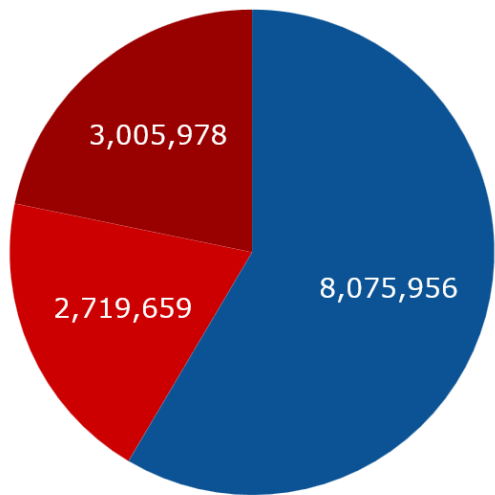
- 4 of 5 dirtiest power plants in Oregon are located in the Lower Umatilla Basin
- 42% of Oregon's industrial emissions from large facilities (25k+ tons) concentrated in the LUB in 2023
  - 5,725,637 metric tons – Roughly equivalent to putting 1.1 million cars on the roads year-round
  - Does not include air pollution from existing vehicle traffic, CAFOs, medium-scale industry, agricultural emissions, residential emissions, etc.



# Air Pollution – Disproportionate Burden

## Industrial Air Pollution from Large Facilities

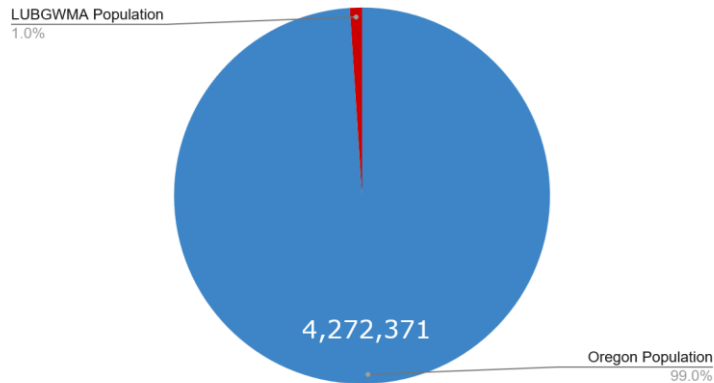
Data from EPA FLIGHT database (2023) - Measured in Metric Tons



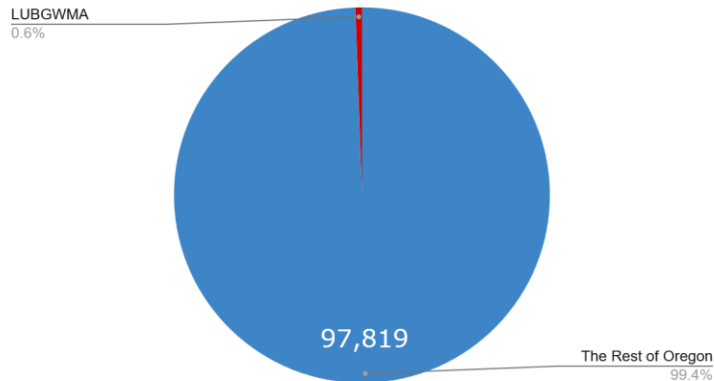
● All 34 other Counties ● Umatilla Co. ● Morrow Co.

*Does not include CAFOs, moderate-scale industry, rail or overland freight, wastewater anaerobic digesters, etc.*

## LUBGWMA Population



## LUBGWMA Land Mass (square miles)





# Lower Umatilla – A Sacrifice Zone



"I didn't even know I was pregnant at the time, and I was consuming the water, and then I miscarried that baby...and then I got pregnant again, and was still drinking the water without knowing it was contaminated..and then another one"

- Maria's well test result was above 45 mg/l

# People's Interest: Uphold State Policy

## Protect: Water, Air and Public Health

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