

To: House Committee for Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resource and Water
From: Margaret Livesay, Resident
Re: Support of House Bill 2168
Date: January 20,2025

As a citizen of Oregon for over 35 years and a recently retired OSU Extension Benton/Linn County faculty member, I strongly support HB2168. During my career, I worked directly with rural residents that depended on a groundwater well for their drinking water, and a septic system for waste disposal. From my first hand experiences, I know the value of education to inform well and septic owners about the importance of regularly testing their source of drinking and the maintenance of their waste disposal systems.

I worked with both farmers and neighborhood families and learned that many rural residents do not fully understand risks they sometimes pose to their own water (e.g. the well house is used for chemical storage), or grasp that a activity near their well such as application of agri-chemicals, excess animal waste, or a neighbors septic may pose a risk to their drinking water source. Some residents reside in groundwater management areas or may live near industrial sites, landfills, or the urban-rural interface. Often the only testing they have done on their well was when they bought the property many years ago. Because people cannot see groundwater it is easy to ignore testing as long the tap runs and the toilet flushes.

In closing, I believe that education and connecting rural well users to available technical and testing resources is an important part in protecting the health of Oregonians and helping to ensure groundwater is safe for future generations. This combined approach strengthens the bill and the outcome. I encourage you to support the passing of HB 2168.

Thank you,
Margaret Livesay