

My name is Michelle Armstrong Zielinski, I have worked as an agronomist for over 20 years working with over 200 different crops here in the Willamette Valley. Fertilizer recommendations have changed greatly over this time, the industry has a better understanding of crop usage and application timing. Also over this timeframe, commodity prices have not kept up with cost of inputs, and farmers have to carefully consider what and how much they apply as input costs have skyrocketed. While newer research and improved soil sampling methods have given farmers and agronomists better insights into what the crop needs and when it needs it, there is no standardized guidance that could be used to determine overapplication. It has taken me many years to learn and understand the needs of the crops I work with to prevent nutrient deficiencies, and this knowledge hinges on many factors such as crop variety, time of planting, and soil temperatures.

I see other issues with this proposed bill, as it targets only growers of a certain size and leaves out many other sources of nitrate contamination. For example, residential nutrient applications to lawns and flowerbeds can and often do run directly into storm drains. Professional producers have every interest in growing the best crop they can, as cost effectively as they can. Also, fertilizers come in many different forms, some of which have more movement through soil and into groundwater than others, such as applying manure in organic systems. We use nitrogen inhibitors on non-organic nitrogen sources which keeps nitrogen in a form that reduces it from leaching or volatilizing.

Oregon's environment, combined with the sheer number and variety of crops grown here, presents very unique challenges to understanding crop nutrient needs. This is not something that regulators would be able to standardize and implement. Producers are some of the most knowledgeable experts on this topic -please allow them to do their jobs, feeding the citizens here in Oregon, the United States, and the world. I ask you to oppose SB747.