

February 1, 2025

To: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
From: Impacted Community Member
Re: Support of Senate Bill 747 - Fertilizer Use Reporting

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, and members of the Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire,

I have lived in Hermiston for the last 12 years and consider the Lower Umatilla Basin my home. I am writing to support the fertilizer reporting bill, Senate Bill 747.

I recently learned about the nitrate groundwater contamination in our area. I am on city water and don't know the exact nitrate level, but I know that due to decades of contamination, the water we drink must be treated so that it's safe to consume. It's also my understanding that certain filtration systems can only treat and reduce the contaminants so much.

I work in social services and am concerned about the widespread contamination. The rural families that we serve don't have access to safe water. I have seen families that need to purchase water, which I believe is a human right. Everyone should have access to safe drinking water. The ongoing contamination concerns me. There should be a foreseeable or practical solution for the future. That's why I support Senate Bill 747, the fertilizer reporting bill. Fertilizer from large-scale irrigators is one of the largest sources of nitrate pollution in the Lower Umatilla Basin.

My father is a farmer, he has always warned us of the harmful chemicals that get used on crops to help produce the food that we eat. I believe more conscious and efficient farming practices are something we all could benefit from. Our environment and communities are healthier, and farmers also save money on all the fertilizer being purchased by reducing how much is being used and/or wasted. Senate Bill 747 would require large-scale irrigators to report their fertilizer use once a year and for the Oregon Department of Agriculture to monitor fertilizer use. This would help bring awareness to where less fertilizer is needed depending on the crop.

We need your leadership to help protect the communities you serve. It's time for someone to step up and change practices that have harmed our communities for decades. I urge you to stop the pollution of our wells and support fertilizer reporting. Support Senate Bill 747.

Sincerely,
Impacted Community Member
Hermiston, Oregon