



OREGONIANS FOR FOOD & SHELTER

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A non-profit coalition to promote the efficient production of quality food and fiber while protecting human health, personal property and the environment, through the integrated, responsible use of pest management products, soil nutrients and biotechnology.

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February 3, 2025

Senate Committee Natural Resources and Wildfire
Re: Opposition to SB 747

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2947. Oregonians for Food & Shelter (OFS) is a diverse coalition with members across Oregon's natural resource sector, including many of Oregon's agricultural commodity groups and the forest products industry as well as manufacturers of the tools our producers use to grow food and fiber. Our members come together around the importance of pesticides, fertilizers, and biotechnology in producing and protecting natural resources. OFS advocates for science-based policy, innovation, and stewardship related to these tools.

We appreciate the intent of this bill in response to concerns regarding the ongoing issue of nitrate contamination to groundwater in certain areas of the state. Responsible management of nutrients is of top concern to OFS and our members. We have members and partners directly engaged in the Lower Umatilla Basin (LUB) Groundwater Management Area Committee, in ODA's Ag Water Quality Program and specifically the new Strategic Implementation Area for groundwater in the LUB region, and in many other ongoing efforts to identify effective short and long-term solutions to this longstanding issue. It is disappointing that neither producers nor agricultural organizations were consulted as this bill concept was put together.

This bill proposes to identify "persons overapplying fertilizer" with simple reporting of rates and crops, through a new, multi-million dollar reporting system. However, there is no standardized guidance available for legal enforcement on rates, which are determined based on a variety of factors that impact nutrient needs and crop uptake including: type of fertilizer, crops and varieties, soil type, times of year and planting, irrigation, the use of cover cropping, and other agronomic practices. ***SB 747 displays an alarming lack of understanding of crop nutrition science and could not feasibly be enacted as a basis for regulatory programming or enforcement.***

The issue of nitrate contamination deserves a robust, science-based discussion involving experts in a variety of fields. Our members are ready and willing to participate in these discussions to share knowledge and perspectives from agriculture, and in fact are already doing so. But this bill does not reflect the expertise, understanding, or ***collaboration*** needed to foster meaningful dialogue and identify effective solutions.



Before voting on this bill, we encourage legislators to consult with state agencies and university specialists to understand the complexity of the issue of nitrate contamination, the variety of contamination sources *outside of agriculture*, and the ongoing work and investments happening at the state level. We also encourage a greater focus on remediation of legacy contamination, the primary driver of this decades-long issue.

OFS invites meaningful dialogue about practical and productive ways to support nutrient stewardship among producers, but this bill misses the mark and would be a very costly mistake. We ask you to please work *with us* not *against us*, and *be better informed* about the context of the regulations you are designing and voting on by involving the necessary experts. And consider that we are here as partners, and as an important source of expertise. Please vote no on SB 747.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Murray".

Katie Murray
Executive Director
Oregonians for Food & Shelter