

Submitter: Laura M Ohanian  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and  
Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB747

Please Support SB 747 – Protecting Communities from Fertilizer Pollution

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Laura M. Ohanian, and I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 747 because it is a critical step toward protecting communities from fertilizer pollution and advancing environmental justice in Oregon.

**Protect Drinking Water for Vulnerable Communities:** Low-income and rural communities are disproportionately affected by fertilizer runoff and nitrate-contaminated drinking water. In places like Morrow and Umatilla Counties, families have been forced to rely on bottled water because their wells are unsafe. SB 747 will provide much-needed transparency on fertilizer use, helping the state identify pollution sources and protect water quality.

**Hold Large Landowners Accountable for Pollution:** Communities of color and low-income residents often live closest to industrial agriculture operations, where fertilizer runoff pollutes local waterways. These communities bear the health burden of nitrate exposure, which has been linked to cancer, birth defects, and thyroid disease. Large agricultural landowners must be held accountable for their impact on public health.

**Reduce Air Pollution That Harms Public Health:** Fertilizer overuse doesn't just contaminate water, it also releases nitrous oxide, a dangerous greenhouse gas, and ammonia, which worsens air pollution. Low-income, rural, and BIPOC communities already experience higher rates of asthma and respiratory illness. SB 747 will give state agencies the data they need to track and reduce these harmful emissions.

**Prioritize Community Health:** Communities facing the cumulative impacts of industrial pollution need stronger protections, not continued exposure to toxic contaminants. SB 747 is a common-sense measure that ensures state agencies have the tools to prevent pollution before it happens, rather than forcing communities to deal with the consequences later.

**Empower Communities with Science-Based Oversight:** Environmental justice means making sure public agencies serve all Oregonians, not just polluters. By requiring large agricultural operations to report their fertilizer use, SB 747 ensures that scientific data guides decision-making, so the state can take proactive steps to

prevent harm.

Encouraging responsible fertilizer use helps farmers save money while protecting the safety of drinking water, soil health and preventing long-term environmental damage. The bill allows agencies to provide education and technical assistance to farmers who may be over-applying fertilizer. Excess fertilizer fuels toxic algae growth in Oregon's waterways when it runs off into rivers and lakes, leading to harmful algal blooms that degrade ecosystems and kill fish. The ODA and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) can use this data to identify overuse of fertilizer that could contaminate groundwater and surface water. Other states have already implemented similar reporting laws to curb pollution.

I urge you to support SB 747 to protect drinking water, clean air, and public health, especially for the communities most at risk.

Sincerely,  
Laura M. Ohanian  
Eugene, OR  
[Your City]