

Submitter: Eric Kirsch
On Behalf Of: Eric Kirsch Ent. Inc
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB747

I am writing to express opposition to SB 747. I tend to be rather blunt, but please understand that I do not mean to be offensive in any way. I am a third generation Oregon farmer and our son is a fourth. We grow grass seed for lawns, golf courses, parks and athletic fields, clover seed for growing cover crops and forage for livestock and also hazelnuts for your enjoyment and good health.

With all due respect, this bill is a solution looking for a problem. It makes the assumption that farmers are routinely over-applying fertilizer to the crops they grow. This is a rather silly supposition at best and at worst, an insult to farmers, whether intended or not. The bill is being proposed by people who simply do not understand agriculture. It's rather maddening to the women and men out there doing the work, who possess the know-how to do it well and correctly in an environmentally responsible manner, constantly being second guessed by well meaning folks who simply don't know what they don't know.

To put it simply, FARMERS ARE NOT OVER-APPLYING FERTILIZER! To anyone who thinks this isn't true, please, ask yourself, "Why would farmers intentionally do something harmful to their growing crop"? Over-application of fertilizer or any other crop input, including water, is harmful to the environment and to the crop, irresponsible, wasteful and financially foolish. Have you looked into the cost of fertilizer?

Believe me, farmers don't use any more fertilizer than is necessary. Just so you know, farmers apply the amount of fertilizer that gives the maximum return on investment. Most crops will yield more if they are fertilized at a higher rate. In other words, crops aren't biologically maxed out at common usage rates. Even if you applied more fertilizer, the crop would still put it to beneficial use. The crop would yield more, without harm to the environment. But economically it makes no sense to do so. The cost of the extra inputs out-weighs the increased value received. Fertilizer has to be ridiculously over-applied to become harmful to the environment, and at those rates, it's also harmful to the crop... so it doesn't happen.

So let's say the bill passed and farmers are reporting the requested information. As far as ODA, "Identifying persons who are over-applying fertilizer", this just shows more misunderstanding of farming. In Oregon there are MANY soil types, many crop types and crop use requirements, many weather patterns and many variables from year to year. There simply wouldn't be a way for someone in Salem to be able to determine if over-application was occurring based on the data. Have any of you talked to anyone at ODA? Please consider it. Something as simple as that might be a really good idea!

I feel like if this bill passes, and farmers comply by reporting their fertilizer use, the

only thing that will come of it is more money wasted by the government trying to analyze the data and more wasted time and money by the farmers who have been saddled with yet another burden of regulation... all for nothing. Nothing good or useful will come of it!!

Please don't pass this bill. If I were you, I wouldn't even waste your time considering it. You all have much more important and pressing issues to tackle!!