

Submitter: Erik Zander
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or
Topic: SB747

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB747, which poses significant challenges to my farm in Yamhill, Oregon, as well as to the broader agricultural community. While I appreciate efforts to protect groundwater quality, this bill is fundamentally flawed in several critical ways and would impose unnecessary financial and operational burdens without yielding meaningful benefits.

First and foremost, fertilizer is already one of the most expensive inputs for farmers, and its cost has skyrocketed in recent years. As a result, producers are already highly incentivized to apply only what is necessary to support crop growth. The assumption that farmers are over-applying fertilizer is not only incorrect but ignores the economic realities we face daily.

Furthermore, fertilizer application rates vary significantly based on numerous factors, including crop type, soil conditions, weather patterns, and other agronomic considerations. There is no single, standardized rate that can be applied across all farming operations, even within the same crop category. For example, agronomic rates differ even between varieties of the same crop, making a one-size-fits-all regulatory approach both impractical and scientifically unsound.

The proposal in SB747 reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of crop nutrition science and groundwater impacts. Effective nutrient management is already a priority for farmers, who rely on extensive testing, research, and expert recommendations to apply fertilizers responsibly. Imposing arbitrary restrictions without scientific backing or consultation with producers will not lead to better outcomes but will instead create unnecessary regulatory hurdles.

Additionally, the threshold of 200 acres set forth in the bill is entirely arbitrary, with no apparent basis in data or evidence. Farm size alone does not determine environmental impact, and this blanket number ignores the complexity and variability of agricultural operations. Such an arbitrary threshold unfairly targets certain producers without justification.

Moreover, SB747 proposes the establishment of a multi-million dollar program that would fail to generate the useful data suggested in the bill's language. The cost of implementation would be substantial, yet it would not provide practical solutions or improvements to groundwater quality. Instead, it would place an undue financial and administrative burden on farmers who are already navigating an increasingly

challenging economic landscape.

This issue deserves a robust, informed discussion that includes input from agricultural producers and scientific experts. Farmers are not adversaries in protecting natural resources—we are stewards of the land and have a vested interest in maintaining soil and water quality. Any legislation addressing fertilizer use and environmental concerns must be based on sound science, practical experience, and genuine collaboration with the agricultural community.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose SB747 and instead work toward solutions that are practical, science-based, and developed in partnership with Oregon's farmers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Erik Zander