

Submitter: Jim Doherty
On Behalf Of: The community
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or
Topic: SB747

Good Afternoon Chair Golden and members of the committee. My name is Jim Doherty and I come before you today not just as an advocate, but as someone deeply invested in the well-being of our community in the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area, or LUBGWMA. I've poured my heart into this issue for the last three years, witnessing firsthand the silent crisis that threatens our neighbors, friends, and families.

The LUBGWMA's struggle with nitrate contamination due to agricultural practices is not just a statistic; it's a story of lives affected daily. Here, our community relies on groundwater for everything – from the water we drink to the food we cook. Yet, this very source of life has become a hazard, with nitrate levels consistently breaching health guidelines.

Senate Bill 747 aims to introduce mandatory reporting of fertilizer use for significant agricultural land holdings. This legislation is not about penalizing our hardworking farmers but about gaining essential insights into our practices. By understanding the scope of fertilizer application, we can craft strategies that protect both our agricultural heritage and our health.

Imagine the relief of parents in our community no longer needing to worry about the safety of their children's water. Envision the comfort of knowing that the wells, which have served generations, won't lead to health concerns like miscarriages, blue baby syndrome or cancer. This bill is about restoring a quality of life that has been compromised by pollution.

We've tried addressing this issue before, but without comprehensive data, our solutions have been incomplete. Senate Bill 747 offers us the chance to finally see the full picture. It empowers the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environmental Quality with the information needed to make effective, data-driven decisions.

Today, we have the opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to our community's health and future. Let's choose cleaner water, healthier lives, and a legacy where our children can drink safely from their wells without fear. I urge you to support Senate Bill 747. Thank you for your time and consideration