

Submitter: Mary Howells  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and  
Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or  
Topic: SB747  
Date: February 4, 2025  
To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire  
Subject: Support for Fertilizer Reporting Requirements for Large Farms in Oregon

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and members of the Senate committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire:

My name is Mary Howells, and I live in Albany, Oregon. I am writing in support of SB 747 to require Oregonian farm owners with 200+ irrigated acres of farmland to report how much fertilizer they are using. Every person has the right to access clean, uncontaminated drinking water, and passing this bill would be a necessary step to make this a lived reality for every Oregonian.

It is very concerning that my fellow Oregonians in eastern Oregon are discovering, one by one, that they have been cooking with, bathing in, and drinking water contaminated by nitrates for years. Nitrate contamination leads to serious and adverse health problems such as gastrointestinal cancers and birth defects. Most of the nitrate contamination comes from fertilizers on farmland, which many of the affected Oregonians work on. It is disturbing that the people who feed us are poisoned by the very farms they labor on.

I understand that smaller farmers are concerned that this will place undue burden on them. As a daughter of a small farmer, I understand that farming in and of itself is not easy work. But most farmers in Oregon would not be affected by this bill, because only a tenth of farmers in Oregon own 200+ irrigated acres of farmland. That leaves 90% of farmers, including my father, who would not be affected by this bill. Even then, the owners of these large farms are only obligated by this bill to report their fertilizer usage once a year. If anyone is able to handle this responsibility, it would be these large farm owners. If they are found to use too much fertilizer and were advised to use less, wouldn't it save them money in the long-run?

Please support SB 747 to ensure clean drinking water for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,  
Mary Howells  
Albany, Oregon