

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

Hello,

I am writing to today to oppose the bill.

I am a farmer in the Stayton area. I currently farm about 700 acres of timber and grass seed. I am a 4th generation farmer on one side of my family and 5th generation farmer on the other. I hope that some day my children will be able to follow in my footsteps. I am by no means a large farmer, I am the only full time employee on the farm. I graduated from Oregon State with a crop science degree and I do continuing education through OSU and Chemeketa for the best agricultural and business practices.

I was at the testimony hearing yesterday and I understand the problem that you are wanting to solve. Clean drinking water is something that everyone should be able to access. Farmers need clean drinking water too. I live on the farm and personal water drinking water comes from a well. This is a personal issue to me on multiple fronts.

I do not believe that tracking fertilizer inputs across the entire state will not solve anything especially on a field by field basis. I can guarantee no farmer is over applying and wasting fertilizer on purpose. Fertilizer is far to expensive in a normal market, let alone the current terrible market, to waste. Application rates across a field can vary greatly thanks to technology that change the rate of application as you cross the field. The rate and location of the application is GPS tracked to make sure you do not have over application and loss. The rate can vary depending on soil type and crop health and varies across a field. Who decides what the rates will be for different crop? Different varieties of the same crop will have different fertilizer needs. Also weather and disease pressure can affect fertilizer demands. Will this bill account for those differences or will it just reduce the flexibility of farmers to make a living. Support more research at OSU about fertilizer rates for crop yield, runoff, and leeching. Farmers care about the environment and wasteful practices. We will listen and change when given the proper guidance.

The 200 acre limit and civil penalty are also issues for me. The 200 acre limit is arbitrary and will only really hurt the guy that has 200 acres of irrigated ground. As the only employee on my farm submitting the fertilizer data would fall squarely on me to fulfill. For some farmers 200 acres of irrigated ground is probably enough to make a living off of. I would assume you are trying to cast a wide net to get the most data

but you do not need that wide of a net to get averages for farm application rates. So you are going to harm the small farms and farmers I would hope you want to protect. The penalty is absurd for what is supposed to be a fact finding bill. The penalty will only lead to continued distrust of the state government among the farming community. I would assume you would get less accurate numbers because of the fear of punishment.

This bill is very loose in what it wants to accomplish and how to accomplish it.

I believe that if you want to solve this issue you should localize your action plan to the area that needs help. Make sure you know the sources of you contamination and work to reduce them. I can guarantee that my fertilizer use does not affect the drinking water issues in the lower Umatilla basin.

Please vote no on this bill

Thank you