



Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Shawn O'Neil Supporting HB 2947:

Legislation Provides State Funding Support for Important Public-Safety Study of Wastewater Sludge Applied to Agricultural Fields

Scheduled for public hearing on Feb. 10, 2025, before the House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Owens and McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying on behalf of the City of Wilsonville in support of HB 2947, which funds Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service and the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences (CAS) in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Oregon wastewater service providers to study the occurrence and distribution of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) found in biosolids applied to agricultural fields for crops that are not intended for human consumption.

The City of Wilsonville operates a wastewater-treatment facility where the dried sludge is spread on agricultural fields. Municipalities and farmers have shared a long-standing partnership using treated organic materials collected and processed at municipal wastewater facilities as nutrient-rich fertilizers and soil conditioners. Biosolids contribute proven benefits to soil and crops. They also sequester carbon in soil, which is becoming increasingly important as a means to combat the impacts of climate change.

While biosolids are regulated to meet standards that protect public health and the environment, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DEQ have not yet established standards for PFAS in biosolids. Growing scientific evidence indicates that exposure to PFAS substances may lead to a range of human health problems. This presents a significant challenge for wastewater treatment facilities like Wilsonville's that may receive PFAS pollution from industries, businesses, and households. Cities, farmers, and regulators seek to develop a better science-based understanding of the presence of PFAS in municipal biosolids and their impacts on the environment and on crops. This study will deliver information needed for Oregon leaders, municipal wastewater utilities, and farmers to make sound decisions about the future of these practices.

The City appreciates your consideration and urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 2497.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shawn O'Neil", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Shawn O'Neil, Mayor
City of Wilsonville