

January 30, 2025

Representative Ken Helm, Co-Chair
Representative Mark Owens, Co-Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301



**Recycled Water
Department**

Subject: Support for House Bill 2947—the Biosolids PFAS Study Funding Bill

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, and Members of the Committee:

As the municipal wastewater service provider and biosolids generator in our community, the City of Hermiston strongly supports and urges your YES vote on House Bill (HB) 2947.

HB 2947 would fund Oregon State University (OSU) to study the effects of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in land applied biosolids on soil, water, and agricultural crops in select sites in Oregon. 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.

This biosolids PFAS study is needed because there is growing scientific evidence that exposure to PFAS substances may lead to a range of human health problems. This presents a significant challenge for wastewater treatment facilities, like Hermiston's, that receive PFAS pollution from industries, businesses, and households. Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to treat complex chemicals like PFAS, which pass through to water and biosolids. Data collected in Oregon to date reflects that Oregon does not have the types of PFAS generating industries or the highly concerning levels of PFAS that have been found in other parts of the country. It is important, however, that cities, farmers, and regulators develop a better science-based understanding of the presence of PFAS in municipal biosolids and their impacts in the environment and on crops. HB 2947 will provide the funding needed to develop the science to inform future biosolids management practices in Oregon.

The City of Hermiston is supportive of this study and urges you to support HB 2947.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William L. Schmittle".

William L. Schmittle
City of Hermiston
Recycled Water Superintendent