



Metropolitan Wastewater MANAGEMENT COMMISSION



partners in wastewater management

MWMC Commission

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Springfield Citizen

Peter Ruffier
Eugene Citizen

Alan Stout
Springfield City Councilor

Administration

Matt Stouder
MWMC Executive Officer
City of Springfield
225 Fifth Street
Springfield, Oregon 97477
(541) 726-3694
FAX (541) 726-2309

Operations

Michelle Miranda
Wastewater Director
City of Eugene
410 River Avenue
Eugene, Oregon 97404
(541) 682-8600
FAX (541) 682-8601

February 6, 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

Sent electronically via OLS portal

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 regional wastewater service provider and biosolids generator in the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area in Lane County, the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC) 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 and decades of research demonstrate that land application of biosolids is one of the most environmentally responsible and beneficial management practices for communities. They also sequester carbon in soil, which is becoming increasingly important as a means to combat the impacts of climate change. We must ensure that biosolids continue to be protected from contaminants and be managed with the best scientific understanding.

The MWMC is a regional partnership between the City of Eugene, the City of Springfield, and Lane County to protect our community's health and the environment by providing high-quality wastewater services. With a growing service area population of over 275,000, the MWMC is one of Oregon's largest wastewater utilities and strives to be recognized as a leader in protecting water quality through sustainable and fiscally responsible practices while promoting safety and a common understanding of the wastewater treatment process.

February 10, 2025

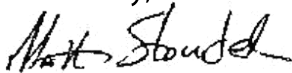
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The MWMC owns and operates the Biocycle Farm, a nearly 400-acre poplar tree farm where hybrid poplars are managed as an agricultural crop to utilize excess biosolids from our cooperative farm program. Approximately 75% of our annual biosolids production is used for commercial farmland soil enrichment. The MWMC has collaborated with OSU and other research and academic institutions to advance biosolids science and management practices through the availability of the Biocycle Farm for studies.

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 the MWMC'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 nor the highly concerning levels of PFAS that have prompted health concerns and moratoria 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. Without HB 2947, Oregon risks losing the benefits of our biosolids programs and passing the direct and indirect costs on to our communities.

The MWMC is committed to participating in this study and urges you to support HB 2947.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Stouder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matt" and last name "Stouder" clearly distinguishable.

Matt Stouder
MWMC Executive Officer