



PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION
Environmental Public Health

Kate Brown, Governor



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September 30, 2020

Mr. Lauris Davies
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Environmental Protection Agency Region X
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155
Seattle, WA 98101-3188

Reference: 20-C04

RE: January 16, 2020, Petition to EPA for Emergency Action Pursuant to Safe Drinking Water Act
Section 1431 to Address Nitrate in LUB GWMA in North Central Oregon

Dear Mr. Davies:

This letter is in follow up to a communication from the State of Oregon on July 2, 2020, regarding the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Manager Area ("LUBGWMA"). Below we provide an update on the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA's) ability to remain engaged in this work.

We regret to share with you that after September 30, 2020, the Domestic Well Safety Program (DWSP) at OHA will go dormant until we secure further funding. This letter provides details of what this means for the program, our partnerships, Domestic Well Testing Act (DWTA, [ORS 448.271](#)) data, water insecurity work and future possibilities.

In June 2020, OHA applied for renewed federal funding of our DWSP, which grant funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had supported for seven years in advance of the September 30, 2020 end date of the current grant. On September 3, 2020, CDC indicated OHA would not receive funding for the upcoming grant cycle. Although there are no guarantees that future federal or state funds will become available, the earliest opportunity OHA could secure such funding will be summer or fall 2021. The 2021 state legislative session may provide an opportunity to fund the program starting next summer through general state funds. Otherwise, we will continue to apply for CDC funding opportunities as they become available. We plan to keep aware for other funding opportunities as they arise and intend to pursue any opportunities that cross our path.

We intend to leave the DWSP organized and ready for the next funding opportunity. Fortunately, our partnership with Oregon State University and the Be Well! study will provide 0.1 FTE to dedicate to DWSP. With this time, we will participate in the study, help develop study-related outreach materials and continue answering the phones and responding to emails. We will continue to collect DWTA data in physical and electronic folders until we secure further funding. Regarding DWTA data, we will be able to provide existing data on request, but will not be entering new data to the OHA database, nor providing residents with individual outreach based on DWTA data showing poor water quality or conducting new statewide domestic groundwater hazard analyses. We will also no longer participate in

outreach and education efforts in support of our partners including realtors, private well professionals, laboratories and natural resource partners.

While we are obligated to suspend the data, outreach and engagement functions of the DWSP, we are carrying out related actions to address environmental health risks related to water. Over the past two years, we began developing the evidence base to support policies to ensure people in Oregon have adequate and equitable access to clean, safe and affordable water for drinking, cooking, sanitation and hygiene so as to avoid the effects of water insecurity. We [published a systematic literature review](#) that is already informing statewide water planning efforts including Oregon's 100-Year Water Vision. In coordination with our Environmental Public Health Tracking program, we are already taking steps to quantify the issue of water insecurity in Oregon. We are hopeful that future funding of DWSP will help us draw attention to some of the issues faced by Oregon's private domestic well users. Please feel free to contact me at Gabriela.G.Goldfarb@state.or.us or 971-673-3284 or Curtis Cude, Surveillance Unit Manager at Curtis.G.Cude@state.or.us or 971-673-0975.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gabriela Goldfarb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gabriela" being more prominent than the last name "Goldfarb".

Gabriela Goldfarb
Environmental Public Health Section Manager
Oregon Health Authority – Public Health Division

Cc: Mr. Justin Greene, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Ms. Stephanie Page, Oregon Department of Agriculture
Ms. Racquel Rancier, Oregon Water Resources Department