

February 17, 2025

To: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Subject: Support for \$4 Million in Water Equity Funding

RE: HB 3525 (renter's well-water testing)

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

My name is Jamie Pang, and I am the Deputy Director of Programs and Policy of Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA), a member-based alliance of over 20 urban and rural communities across the state of Oregon. OJTA supports HB 3525, which requires landlords of well-water housing units to test their water for arsenic, E. coli and nitrates.

In 2020, OJTA hosted a statewide Listening Tour with our core alliance members that brought together people with disabilities, rural families, people of color, and working folks across the state to gather insights that continue to shape OJTA's policy efforts today. During the tour, many alliance members and their communities voiced concerns about water quality and scarcity in various parts of Oregon, where industrial agriculture and logging have depleted and damaged vital watersheds. Those living and working in agricultural communities shared fears that toxins and other chemicals are contaminating their drinking water, an issue that persists to this day.

Oregon law requires landlords to maintain habitable rental properties, including access to safe drinking water ([ORS 90.320](#)). Unfortunately, this does not include drinking water from domestic wells. Yet it is estimated that 23% of Oregon relies on domestic or private wells for drinking water.¹

The majority of OJTA's members, alliance members, and their communities are renters, and they are low income. This means they do not have control over their water infrastructure, water systems, or water sources. HB 3525 would level the playing field and require landlords to test for the most common contaminants in well-water,² and treat a contaminated well, should test results show that drinking water contains E.coli, arsenic, or nitrates above the maximum contamination levels set by the EPA. And it

¹<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/healthyenvironments/drinkingwater/sourcewater/domesticwellsafety/pages/index.aspx>

²<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/DRINKINGWATER/SOURCEWATER/DOMESTICWELLSAFETY/Pages/Testing-Recommendations.aspx>

would require a landlord share the test results with tenants and give them the transparency they need to protect themselves and their families.

Oregon is facing a housing crisis, and solving it requires more than just building new housing. Rather, housing with safe and healthy drinking water sources are part of the solution needed for Oregonians already facing environmental disparities.

By passing HB 3525, the legislature will help ensure that all Oregonians, especially those most impacted, have access to clean and reliable water. This is a policy change needed to ensure the health, safety, and resilience for our communities today and for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration,

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