

Submitter: Amanda Muse

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3419

I strongly oppose the proposed amendments to H.R. 3419, which seeks to mandate the installation of meters on private wells. This amendment represents an unnecessary overreach of government authority, infringes upon private property rights, and places an undue financial burden on well owners without clear justification or benefit.

#### Violation of Property Rights:

Private wells are the property of individual landowners who have invested in the drilling, maintenance, and operation of these water sources. Requiring meters on these wells is tantamount to government interference in a resource that has been lawfully accessed and managed by private citizens. This measure effectively treats private well owners as public utilities, despite their wells existing on private land and being funded through personal means.

#### Unjustified Financial Burden:

The installation, maintenance, and potential monitoring of these meters would impose significant costs on well owners. Many of these individuals rely on private wells precisely to avoid the high costs of municipal water services. Forcing them to shoulder additional expenses, whether through direct installation costs or potential regulatory fees, is unfair and economically harmful, particularly to rural and agricultural communities that depend on well water for their livelihoods.

#### Lack of Clear Environmental Justification:

Proponents argue that metering private wells is necessary for water conservation and management, yet there is little evidence to suggest that private well usage is a major contributor to water shortages. Unlike large-scale industrial or municipal water consumption, private wells typically serve individual households or small agricultural operations. The vast majority of well owners already manage their water use responsibly, as they bear the direct consequences of overuse, including well depletion and costly repairs. There is no compelling evidence that such an intrusive measure is needed to regulate personal water consumption.

#### A Precursor to Unwarranted Regulation and Taxation:

The metering of private wells sets a dangerous precedent. If meters are installed, what prevents future legislation from imposing additional regulations, usage fees, or even taxation on water drawn from private property? This amendment could open the door to further government control over a resource that should remain under the

stewardship of those who own the land.

This amendment is an overreach that undermines property rights, places an undue burden on private well owners, and lacks a compelling justification. Instead of imposing broad and invasive regulations, efforts should focus on incentivizing voluntary conservation practices and improving infrastructure for public water systems. For these reasons, I strongly dissent from the proposed amendment and urge all others to reject this unnecessary and intrusive measure.