



Farmworker Housing Development Corporation

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April 2, 2025

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Maria Elena Guerra, Executive Director of the Farmworker Housing Dev. Corporation. I am writing today to support SB 1154 to fix Oregon's broken groundwater pollution laws.

As providers of affordable rental housing serving predominantly the farmworker community, we have experienced the lack of access to clean water for our farmworker families. Farmworkers and their families, who often rely on private wells for drinking water, are particularly vulnerable because these wells are not subject to the same regulations as public water systems. This makes regular testing and mitigation efforts crucial for their health and safety.

Farmworkers in the Willamette Valley face several health risks due to groundwater contamination, particularly from elevated nitrate levels. Here are some key concerns: Methemoglobinemia ("Blue Baby Syndrome"), cancer risks, reproductive and developmental issues, and respiratory and skin conditions.

Oregon needs SB 1154 to fix the broken Groundwater Quality Protection Act of 1989. That law has failed, and because of that failure groundwater pollution continues to get worse in our most vulnerable communities and fuel public health crises in places like the Lower Umatilla Basin. It has allowed billion-dollar corporations to pollute more and more for the sake of profit, it has failed to give agencies the tools they need to enforce the law, and it has failed to hold agencies accountable when they fail to enforce the law and protect at-risk Oregonians.

SB 1154 needs to give Oregon's agencies the tools they need to hold polluters accountable for the damage they've done to Oregonian communities, it needs to hold agencies accountable for failing to use those tools to stop polluters.

SB 1154 still has a long way to go, but the longer we wait, the more damage is done to Oregonian communities. **Please support SB 1154 and keep the discussion going** so that we can finally fix this broken law and hold polluters accountable.

In solidarity,

Maria Elena Guerra (MEG), MPA (She, Her, Hers, Ella)

Executive Director

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