



TO: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

SUBJECT: YES on SB 1154

April 8, 2025

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash and members of the Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire,

My name is Cynthia Ramirez and I am a Policy Associate with PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. At PCUN, we work to empower farmworkers and Latinx working families to improve their working and living conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy.

I am writing in support of SB 1154, to fix Oregon's groundwater protection law. Water provides us with energy, life, and holds a deep cultural significance across the world. There continues to be a lack of investments in protecting Oregon's water. Safe drinking water continues to be a concern for farmworkers, particularly our farmworkers living in rural areas. Our rural communities are reliant on groundwater as their main drinking water source. The continued contamination of drinking water has put the health and safety of our rural communities at greater risk. Many rural Oregonians are affected by nitrate contamination. This can cause serious health problems like Blue Baby Syndrome, gastrointestinal cancers (bladder, stomach, throat, etc.), thyroid problems, birth defects, & more. We should not be waiting until the worst case scenario to begin protecting our water.

In 2020, Oregon Water Futures formed a project which was created to elevate water priorities from communities currently underrepresented or historically discriminated against in water policy decision-making.<sup>1</sup> They found that communities of color care deeply about our shared water, yet they have been excluded from key conversations in making policy and infrastructure decisions. Additionally, community members are motivated to learn more about water related issues and are willing to share information within their communities.<sup>2</sup> This further shows the importance of including community

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<sup>1</sup>[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/609d9e5f77619d2a9f89795d/t/60a7e87020a5810a364944f2/1621616753514/2-pager\\_English.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/609d9e5f77619d2a9f89795d/t/60a7e87020a5810a364944f2/1621616753514/2-pager_English.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/609d9e5f77619d2a9f89795d/t/60a7e87020a5810a364944f2/1621616753514/2-pager\\_English.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/609d9e5f77619d2a9f89795d/t/60a7e87020a5810a364944f2/1621616753514/2-pager_English.pdf)

members in conversations that impact their lives. Access to clean water is a shared concern across Oregon.

Our rural communities are facing the consequences of big polluters. We must not let all decisions solely be in the hands of big polluters or agencies, as they are well aware of the harm they are doing to our environment and Oregonians. Our agencies are failing our communities by not including them in life-changing decisions. We must hold polluters financially accountable for their actions against our environment.

I urge your support of SB 1154 to protect our drinking water for all Oregonians across the state.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Ramirez  
Policy Associate  
PCUN