



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 10th, 2025

RE: Testimony opposed to SB 1154-1

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. As both a member of the Oregon House and a lifelong farmer, I rise in strong opposition to SB 1154 and its -1 amendment. My family operates a multi-generational family farm, and I can tell you firsthand how deeply this legislation would affect families like mine across rural Oregon.

A Heavy-Handed Approach That Threatens Family Farms

SB 1154-1 represents a major overreach by the state into the lives and livelihoods of agricultural producers. It allows unelected bureaucrats to rewrite farm practices, inspect our land without a warrant, and impose restrictions without clear scientific proof. These are not minor regulatory tweaks — they are sweeping powers that would burden responsible farmers with mandates, red tape, and uncertainty.

The bill empowers state agencies to:

- Restrict how we use water on our own land,
- Require extensive recordkeeping tied to assumptions, not proven impacts,
- Limit nutrient applications essential to crop health, and
- Impose new land use restrictions that directly affect farm viability.

SB 1154-1 does not require agencies to prove that agricultural activity is actually causing water contamination before regulating us. Instead, they can act based on broad correlations. That’s not how good science—or good policy—works.

On our farm, we’ve spent years improving water efficiency and protecting our soil. Yet under this bill, we could still be hit with restrictions simply because we happen to operate in an area labeled a “management zone.”

Farming is Not the Enemy — We’re Part of the Solution

Oregon’s farmers are stewards of the land and water. We depend on clean water just as much as anyone—our crops, livestock, and communities rely on it. But solutions should come through collaboration, not punishment. This bill treats farms as the problem without acknowledging the good work being done or giving us a real seat at the table.



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There's no reason we can't improve water quality while supporting rural economies. But SB 1154-1 would tip the scales so far toward state control that it risks driving small farms out of business.

A Complex System Built for Bureaucrats, Not Communities

The bill's structure is overly complicated, creating overlapping "concern" and "management" areas with different rules and processes. Rural counties and landowners will struggle to understand and comply. The cost and confusion will be enormous — not just for farmers, but for local governments already stretched thin.

It also weakens local authority. Counties could be forced to deny new homes unless they're connected to urban-style water systems — even in rural zones. DEQ inspectors could enter private property with minimal notice, without consent. That's not how Oregon should operate.

Conclusion

Family farms are the backbone of Oregon's rural communities and economy. We want clean water. We want healthy land. However, SB 1154-1 threatens to undermine both by treating us as a problem to be managed rather than partners in finding solutions.

For the sake of Oregon's farmers, our land, and our future, I strongly urge you to oppose SB 1154-1 and work toward a more balanced, respectful path forward.

Respectfully submitted into the record,

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Oregon State Representative
District 15