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April 30, 2025

To: House Committee On Rules

**RE: HB 3525 (Renter's Well-Water Testing)**

Co-Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marisol De La Torre, and I am the legislative advocate at Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA), a member-based alliance of over 20 urban and rural communities across the state of Oregon. I am writing on behalf of OJTA to express our general support of HB 3525. However, we are disappointed that the current version of the bill has been narrowed to restrict testing to just groundwater management areas for arsenic, E. coli, and nitrates. We believe this limitation reduces the bill's impact in ensuring the safety of Oregonians.

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. A consistent and urgent concern raised during the tour was the declining quality and availability of clean drinking water in many parts of Oregon, where industrial agriculture and logging have severely impacted vital watersheds. Those living and working in rural parts of the state expressed deep concerns about water contamination caused by toxins and other harmful chemicals. Five years later, these water issues persist and remain unresolved.

While Oregon law requires landlords to maintain habitable rental properties, including access to safe drinking water, this statute does not currently apply to domestic wells ([ORS 90.320](#)). Yet an estimated 23% of Oregonians rely on domestic or private wells as their primary water source.<sup>1</sup> This legal gap puts thousands of renters at risk.

The majority of OJTA's alliance members, and their communities are renters, and they are low income. They do not have control over their water infrastructure. HB 3525 would provide renters with transparency, a basic but essential protection. By requiring landlords

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

to test well water regularly for the most common contaminants and disclose the results to tenants, renters would have the information they need to make informed decisions to protect their health and safety.<sup>2</sup>

While OJTA supports HB 3525, we are concerned that recent amendments have weakened the impact of the latest amendment, which limits the requirement of landlord testing for contaminants to just groundwater management areas of which there are currently three in the state, and areas of groundwater concern, which are not currently clearly defined or listed. Safe drinking water is not a luxury, it is a right.

As Oregon faces a worsening housing crisis, fully addressing water safety must be a part of the solution. Building new housing is important, however, ensuring existing housing is safe, especially for those already experiencing environmental disparities, is equally important.

We urge you to pass HB 3525 to ensure that all Oregonians, including renters who depend on well water, have access to information about the safety of their drinking water. This is a policy change needed to ensure the health, safety, and resilience for our communities today and for future generations.

Thank you.

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<sup>2</sup>[https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/DRINKINGWATER/SOURCEWATER/DO\\_MESTICWELLSAFETY/Pages/Testing-Recommendations.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/DRINKINGWATER/SOURCEWATER/DO_MESTICWELLSAFETY/Pages/Testing-Recommendations.aspx)