

April 30, 2025

Position on Bills at 2025 Session of Oregon Legislature:

HB 3525: Support, but needs improvement



The Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) is a coalition of over 50 local Indivisible groups throughout Oregon that cooperate and amplify their joint efforts to advance important federal and state legislation and engage with elected officials to promote causes for the benefit of all Oregonians.

COIN supports HB 3525, which would:

- require landlords to collect and test samples of drinking water for certain contaminants, if the dwelling unit has one or more exempt wells as a source of drinking water
- require landlords to provide test results to the tenant and to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
- establish requirements for associated testing laboratories and the OHA

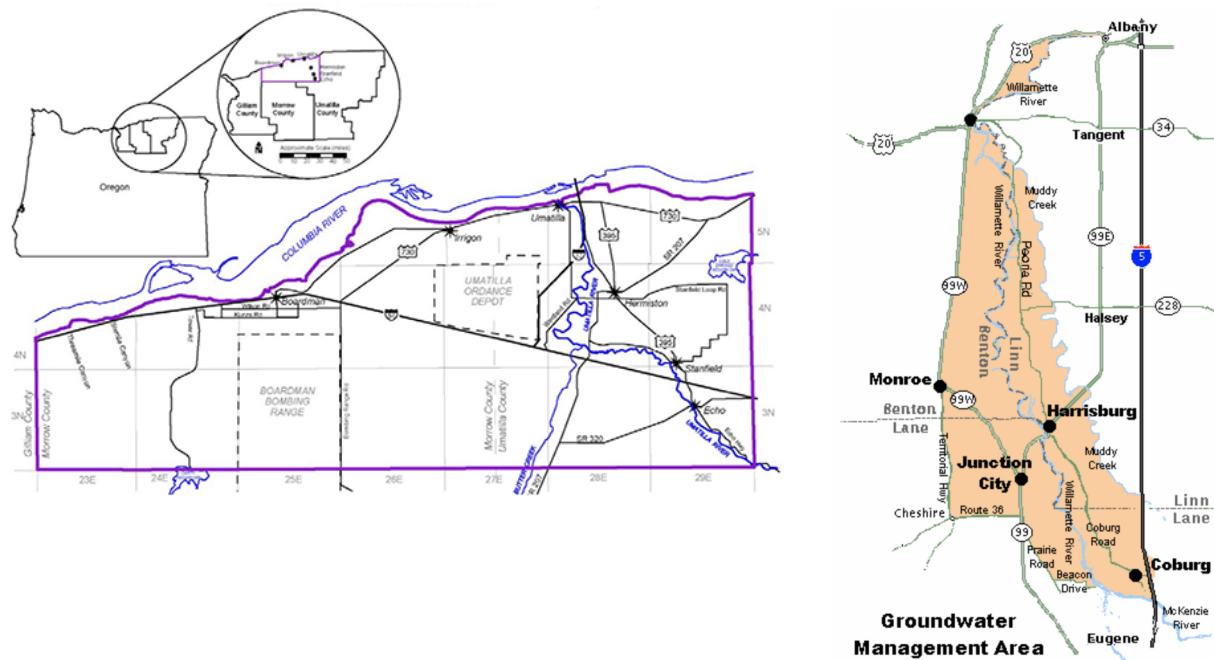
While Oregon law requires landlords to maintain habitable rental properties, including access to safe drinking water, this statute does not currently apply to domestic wells (ORS 90.320). Yet an estimated 23% of Oregonians rely on domestic or private wells as their primary water source.

Unfortunately, the House substantially weakened this bill by removing any requirement that the landlord take action to fix the contamination, if doing so is within the landlord's capacity. For example, while stopping groundwater contamination from a nearby factory farm is not within the landlord's capacity, the landlord could install a water purification system, such as those using reverse osmosis, distillation, or ion exchange resin.

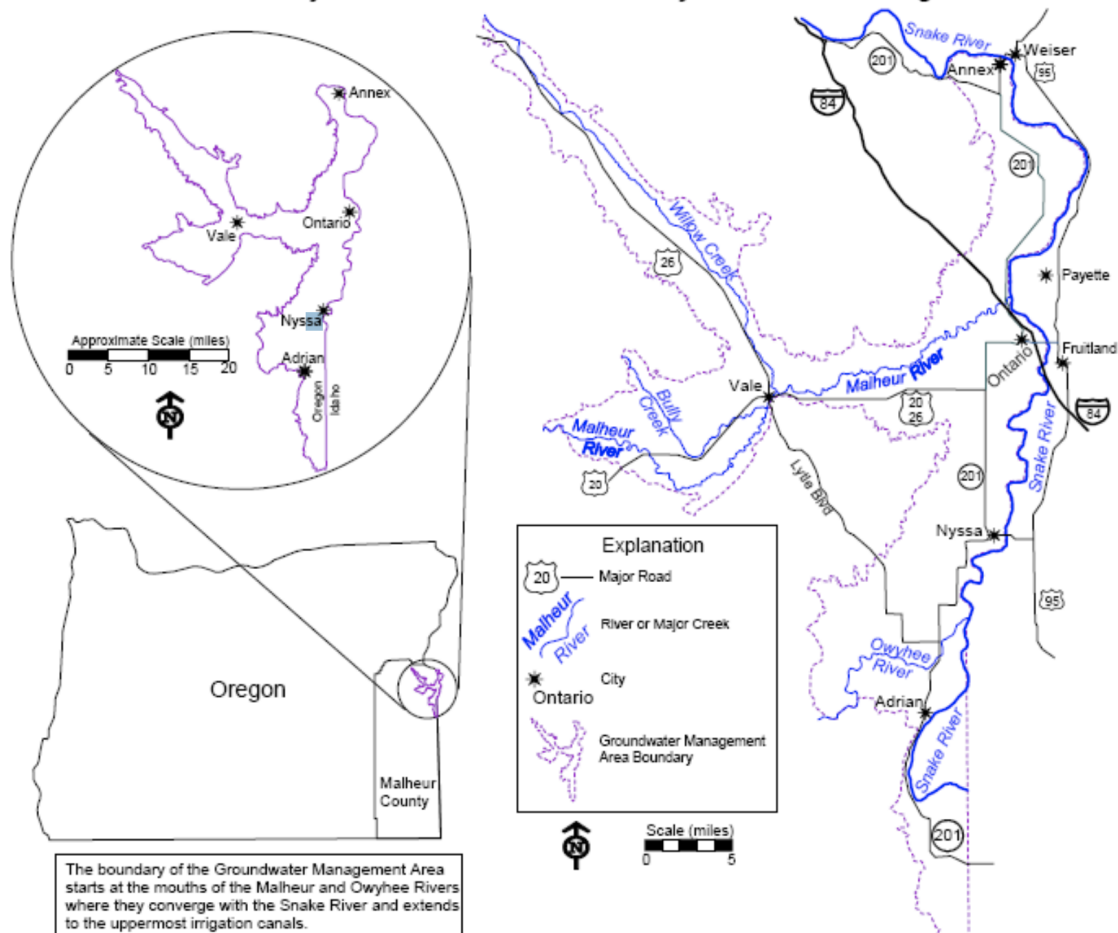
The introduced bill required that the landlord "Treat the drinking water or repair or replace the exempt well," if the test shows "contaminants that exceeds the maximum contamination level in drinking water as established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency." That requirement was removed by the -6 amendment.

This Committee is now considering an -A8 amendment, which would limit the testing requirements to dwelling units that have an exempt well as a source of drinking water and are located within a ground water management area. DEQ has designated only three Groundwater Management Areas, because of elevated nitrate concentrations in groundwater. These include the Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA, the Northern Malheur County GWMA, and the Southern Willamette Valley GWMA. These maps show that

they are quite small and cover a very small portion of Oregon's population:



Location and Boundary of the Northern Malheur County Groundwater Management Area



The -A8 amendment also delays the Act's operative date from June 1, 2026 to June 1, 2027. We urge rejection of that amendment.

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