

Submitter: Denice Searcy  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1154  
NO on SB 1154-A

This bill modifies provisions of law related to declarations of groundwater quality concern areas, and ground water management areas. It also directs the Governor to appoint an agency or agencies to lead an interagency team in ground water, quality concern, areas, and ground water management. It provides that these committees shall act in an advisory capacity.

Amendment 1– Amounts to sweeping overhaul of Oregon’s groundwater policy, threatening, local decision, making, property, rights, and transparency. This amendment grants unelected agencies excessive power to inspect private property, restrict rural development, and impose mandates without clear scientific evidence or due process. Farmers, homeowners, and rural communities will bear the brunt of these bureaucratic overreaches. This also violates the Supreme Court ruling on Chevron. Agencies are not to have control over the citizens, or their affairs.

This amendment is a massive expansion of the state bureaucratic power, which is already too much. It authorizes an unelected inner agency team – under a Governor appointed lead agency – to do these investigations, inspections, permit, reviews, and public messaging. It does not provide meaningful checks or opt out to local governments or citizens. Once declared a “groundwater management area“, local landowners are subject to mandates with limited appeal or due process. This is unconstitutional and unlawful according to the Supreme Court.

This bill undermines local decision-making and property rights. It also permits counties to prohibit new homes unless they are hooked up to an urban style water system or community wells, even in rural zones, which is pretty much impossible. It also allows DEQ inspectors to enter private property to examine septic systems, with only minimal notice regardless of consent. This opens the door for regulatory overreach that punishes land stewards who have not been proven to contribute to the problem. This will kneecap farmers and agricultural land sites.

CONTROL CONTROL CONTROL.  
Vote NO on SB 1154