

Oregon House Committee on Energy and the Environment,

Re:HB 2656 Safe Waters Protection Act

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to urge you to support HB 2656 in order to protect the safety of the watersheds of Oregon.

I had always assumed that this beautiful green state which had been at the forefront of environmental protection would have one of the soundest regulations regarding the protection of drinking water. Instead, the current laws enable logging and aerial and ground spraying of pesticides in the watershed.

I recently learned that our watershed in Oceanside, Oregon is scheduled to be clear-cut this coming summer, 2019. Short Creek which feeds our municipal water supply is on steep terrain, just off the Cape Meares Loop which has been subject to repeated landslides and is currently closed between the Cape Meares Lighthouse and Cape Meares due to the slides. Thus the logging is scheduled to occur in an already fragile environment.

In addition to the risk for slides, aerial spraying of pesticides is also possible in our watershed. I recently learned that in Oregon stature, "pesticide" refers to pesticides, herbicides and rodenticides. As you know, rodents are mammals, like humans. Napalm, rebranded as EZFire, is also used by the timber industry following clear-cuts. Watershed testing is, I've been told, only mandated every 3 years and there is only a requirement to test for three pesticides, regardless of the number of pesticides used. From what I've been told, there is no mandate to test immediately following application, but sometime during the three year period.

In addition to trying to learn about our watershed, we are realizing that similar watersheds have had adverse events occur as a result of logging in their watersheds. Logging in Rockaway has led to increased turbidity which necessitated higher levels of chlorine to treat the water. This resulted in elevated, unsafe levels of trihalomethane (THM) a known carcinogen. Research has shown that THM is more likely to be absorbed through the skin and lungs (bathing) than through drinking. This means that the Brita filter or bottled water would be insufficient to reduce exposure. People who could afford it were able to purchase more than \$3,000 water treatment systems. Please refer to Behind the Emerald Curtain for more information about Rockaway's experience (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0j_Msmz44M).

I am not a geologist, a hydrologist nor an environmental biologist, but I am a genetic counselor and am very cognizant of the laws of unintended consequences. I am sure the timber company did not intend to harm the people of Rockaway Beach, but that is what happened. It will be many decades before the risk for cancers is better understood. The drug company which produced thalidomide did not intend to cause severe birth defects to the children who were exposed in utero. The tobacco farmers did not intend to cause 480,000 deaths per year, according to the CDC. Dr. Ernst Wynder who first reported the association between cigarette smoking and lung cancer in 1950 was criticized for years before the association was accepted. The use of pesticides in our watersheds is too dangerous to be allowed to continue.

HB 2656 will not eliminate the forest industry in Oregon, nor will it eliminate clear-cutting but it will provide needed protections for the water we drink and bathe in. I urge you to support it for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for your time,

Pat Himes, M.S., C.G.C.

Oceanside, OR