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STATE OF OREGON
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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SALEM, OREGON 97301
H-277

Date: March 14th, 2019
To: House Committee on Energy & Environment

Chair Helm and Members of the House Energy and Environment Committee,

Thank you for providing an opportunity for the public to give testimony on House Bill 3340.

In 2018, we saw a dramatic increase of algal blooms happening all over our state, which are directly related to high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in our water supplies, causing algae to grow significantly faster than ecosystems can handle. The Oregon Health Authority admits that only a fraction of all water bodies in Oregon are visually monitored or sampled, “due to limited physical and monetary resources”, yet according to the US Environmental Protection Agency, algal blooms are considered a “major environmental problem”. This was made very clear when Salem experienced a drinking water crisis due to increased nutrients in the city’s water supply, which originates in the Santiam River Watershed.

Not only are algal blooms a serious threat to public health that can lead to respiratory and kidney issues, they can also be detrimental to local economies and outdoor industries. These impacts are exactly why we need continued testing and monitoring. HB 3340 creates tracking, accountability and response for addressing algal blooms through a coordinated effort between the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. HB 3340 puts more focus on DEQ to identify waters that are at greater risk to experience algal blooms through increased monitoring and authority to act, restricting practices that are responsible for the increase in nutrient levels.

HB 3340 will provide adequate authority that these state agencies need to address harmful algal blooms and develop response strategies to mitigate the impacts.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 3340.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Paul Holvey
Oregon House District 8