



Date: April 30, 2019

TO: The Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

FROM: André Ourso, Administrator  
Center for Health Protection  
Public Health Division  
Oregon Health Authority

SUBJECT: House Bill 2250 – Testimony

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee; I am André Ourso, Administrator for the Center for Health Protection, Public Health Division. I am here in support of House Bill 2250.

The Public Health Division has primacy for implementing the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) in our state. We regulate 2,500 public water systems in the state to ensure that drinking water is safe. This work includes inspections, plan review, evaluation of monitoring data and response to contaminant detections. We generally rely on EPA to develop standards for regulated contaminants and to establish a base framework for regulating public water systems. To maintain primacy, we are obligated to adopt standards and regulations that are no less stringent than federal standards, though we are not prohibited from adopting rules that are more stringent. In fact, there are a number of instances where Oregon's rules are currently more stringent than federal regulations; certain disinfection requirements and our recent adoption of state cyanotoxin monitoring rules are examples.

When there are changes to federal rules we carefully evaluate them to determine whether they are sufficiently protective in Oregon. So far, we have not seen backsliding of federal drinking water standards or regulations. In the event that occurs, House Bill 2250 provides clear policy direction to follow a process to assess any significant federal changes relative to a baseline and safeguard existing standards.

I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information.