



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

February 16, 2023

To: [Chair Helm](#), [Vice Chairs Hartman](#) and [Owens](#) and Members of the Committee  
[House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water](#)

Email: [halnrw.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:halnrw.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Re: [HB 2647](#) – **Declaring Algal Blooms a Menace to Public Health - SUPPORT**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon has extensive positions on water quality and quantity. We have a seat on the Oregon Health Authority Drinking Water Advisory Committee. Members have been engaged in past years on searching for statewide answers to the increasing harm and occurrence of algal blooms in waters of the state. We supported legislation in 2021 to move this conversation forward and appreciate the work of the 2021 legislature in that regard. But drought continues in Oregon, leaving water sources susceptible to algal blooms. Between more shallow and less moving waters and the inability of those waters to dilute pollutants, we are seeing an increase in these harmful blooms.

We have supported legislation to address failing septic systems and supported the Dept. of Agriculture's work on nonpoint sources of pollution. We continue to support the Dept. of Environmental Quality's wastewater permitting programs. We have engaged in educational programs to assist urban dwellers on their responsibility to address nonpoint pollution. But more must be done.

It is with this background that we **support HB 2647** and the requirements to determine susceptible water sources, monitor them and address the root causes of on-going blooms. We have regularly shared the Oregon Health Authority's [harmful algal bloom website](#) with our members, but that is an after-the fact backward looking website. Both the Dept. of Environmental Quality and Oregon Health Authority should continue to work together to address this long-standing issue. **Oregonians should expect that our waters are safe not only for drinking but for recreating.**

We appreciate Rep. Holvey and Sen. Taylor for bringing forward HB 2647 and support their vision for addressing the issue of harmful algal blooms statewide. We encourage this committee to pass HB 2647.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Rebecca L. Gladstone in black ink.

Rebecca Gladstone  
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Peggy Lynch in black ink.

Peggy Lynch  
Natural Resources Coordinator