



CLACKAMAS

WATER
ENVIRONMENT
SERVICES

GREGORY L. GEIST | DIRECTOR

Water Quality Protection
Surface Water Management
Wastewater Collection & Treatment

February 28, 2023

Re: HB 3123 - Requires Oregon State University Extension Service and College of Agricultural Sciences of Oregon State University to study fate and transport of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) found in biosolids applied to agricultural fields

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

My name is Greg Geist; I am the Director of Clackamas Water Environment Services in Clackamas County. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 3123 on behalf of our county and our clean water agency peers throughout Oregon.

Clackamas Water Environment Services produces clean water, protects water quality and recovers renewable resources. We do this by providing wastewater services, stormwater management, and environmental education. It's our job to protect public health and to support the vitality of our communities, natural environment, and economy.

As you may know, biosolids are a product of the wastewater treatment process. As wastewater enters one of our facilities, we separate the solids from the water. The separated solids are broken down and used as food by microorganisms in a process that is very similar to how your own stomach works. The process destroys pathogens and produces methane gas that we use to generate electricity to run our facilities. The biosolids that are dewatered and to be beneficially used in agriculture must meet federal and state regulatory requirements.

Every year we land-apply nearly 90% of the 11,000 tons of biosolids generated at our wastewater facilities, in keeping with state and federal regulations. We have developed and maintained collaborative partnerships with farmers to enable the most sustainable and beneficial use of biosolids as a nutrient-rich soil enhancement that has been a win-win for utilities, farms and soil health for over 40 years.

For farmers, biosolids provide nutrients and organic matter to restore soil health, which offsets their need to purchase commercial fertilizer. For Clackamas Water Environment Services, partnering with farmers allows biosolids to be beneficially used as a valuable resource rather than wasted in a landfill. We closely follow scientific studies and PFAS concerns in the media because our mission is to protect human health and the environment, and because we know we will be called upon to help address them. We emphasize that agencies like ours are passive receivers of PFAS, meaning we do not produce or manufacture these chemicals or use them in the treatment process. We simply receive PFAS in the wastewater that arrives at our treatment plants, which is likely to contain trace amounts given the wide range of uses for them, from consumer products in our homes to commercial and industrial applications.

This is a complicated issue and there are no easy answers. There remains an urgent need to conduct research to better understand how PFAC chemicals interact with and impact our environment, and to

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develop science-based and data-driven standards and policies. Good policy and sound management depends on the sound science this study will provide.

We urge your support for this bill and we are available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Geist". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Greg Geist, Director
Clackamas Water Environment Services