



February 4, 2025

To: Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee

Subject: Support SB 747 - Reporting Fertilizer Use to Address Pollution

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee,

My name is Cynthia Ramirez and I am a Policy Associate with PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. At PCUN, we work to empower farmworkers and Latinx working families to improve their working conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy. I am writing on behalf of our members to support SB 747, to establish basic reporting requirements for fertilizer applications on large farms with 200+ irrigated acres.

The overuse of synthetic fertilizers degrades Oregon's land, water, and air quality. Oregon currently does not report on fertilizer use which can lead to the detriment of our environment and communities. Oregon needs to start reporting on the use of fertilizers to protect the public health from contamination and pollution.

We need to think about our communities living in rural parts of Oregon who are being exposed to contaminated water as a result of excessive usage of synthetic fertilizers. Whether that be working on the farms, to living in close proximity to farms which use large amounts of fertilizer. These communities are reliant on groundwater as their main drinking water source. Many rural Oregonians are affected by nitrate contamination due to fertilizer leaching from farmland and contaminating aquifers. This can cause serious health problems like Blue Baby Syndrome, gastrointestinal cancers (bladder, stomach, throat, etc.), thyroid problems, birth defects, & more.

Our farmworkers work with fertilizers while out in the fields. The overuse of fertilizers can be dangerous and cause skin irritation, respiratory problems, and in severe cases, long-term health problems. In addition, the overuse of fertilizers is connected to our air quality. The EPA estimates that agricultural soil management, including the use of fertilizer, is the source of 75% of U.S. nitrous oxide (N₂O) emissions, which is more potent than CO₂ and is a main contributor to climate change. Our communities living in rural areas are disproportionately affected by climate change. We need to think about the future of

our state and the best sustainable practices to protect our environment and communities living in rural areas.

I urge you to support SB 747 so we can continue protecting Oregon's land and our rural communities' health.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Ramirez
Policy Associate
PCUN