

Submitter: Kathy Freeborn Hadley
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB747

Chair Golden & members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources:

My name is Kathy Freeborn Hadley, and I run 2 family farms with my father & husband respectively, on opposite sides of the Willamette Valley.

My initial reaction to this bill, is it's unnecessary government overreach. Farmers are very precise on fertilizer applications - because it's incredibly expensive! Also, a little more here or there can actually hurt you if it causes crops to lodge (fall over), reducing ability to pollinate & be harvested.

On thinking through it logistically though, I see red flags all over the place. Who determines the proper application rates? Analyzes how weather conditions in a given year will affect nutrient storage in the soil or plant uptake? Keeps track of how much each different species and subspecies use (which can change as new varieties are bred)? Who pays for grid sampling over irrigated acres to measure nitrogen levels for that field to GIS map out an appropriate variable rate application? Farmers already do that with certain crops, but how can government say we are right or wrong with our programs unless they are doing the same thing over those same acres? And you all know as well as I, there's not money to fund that.

I completely understand the issue in Morrow County, and comprehensive solutions are required to prevent those situations. But the Willamette Valley is a completely different situation agronomically. We may get more rain, but the crops we grow effectively capture the majority of applied nitrogen (which is perhaps the biggest nutrient to watch for groundwater contamination). In fact, grass seed is known for preventing nitrogen leaching because those plants capture & store nitrogen in the plant's vast root system (we discussed this in my Oregon State crop science classes with Dr. Tom Chastain). Our soils have much more silt and clay also, which helps hold & slow down water movement through the soil (& thus potential for leached nutrients), versus areas with more sand.

Farmers care about the environment - if we don't take care of it, it will not keep us in business! We don't want contamination of wells, because that impacts our families and crops too! The proposal in this bill however, is not the way to manage the situation, at least without further information to know if and where we actually have reasonable reasons to have concern.

Please vote no on SB 747. Thank you.