

Submitter: Hank Keogh
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or
Topic: SB747

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water:

My name is Hank Keogh and I am a Farmer from Corvallis. I am writing today to support SB 747.

This personally impacts me because our farm is in Linn County, and our well for drinking water is in the middle of our neighbor's large grass seed field. The well is contaminated with nitrates to unhealthy levels. We have an osmosis filter that removes the nitrates on one tap that we use for drinking and cooking. All other water sources are non-potable.

Additionally, our land is down a slope from our neighboring grass seed field, and so all the runoff from fertilizer and over-spray runs onto our property, and into a seasonal slough where wood ducks and other wildlife make their homes.

It is so important that we do everything we can to control the groundwater contamination in sensitive areas. Groundwater Management Areas have already been designated by the state as having dangerous levels of contaminants. Not only does this hurt the people living here, taking away their assurance of clean drinking water, but it also impacts the environment and wildlife in the area, and threatens the ability of land to remain productive. This bill has been carefully crafted to apply to farms with 200 acres or more, who likely already track their fertilizer application, and it is not an enforcement or penalty bill. This is simply to make sure ODA has the information to advise farmers on programs and best practices that would help them not only protect water quality but save money on inputs.

We know that farmers are experts on their fields and already have detailed plans for fertilizer application. This bill is to make sure that farmers have all the information they need to make decisions for their farms and ecosystems and get them better access to ODA technical assistance based on real data.

I support SB 747.

Thank you,
Hank Keogh