

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

My name is Ana Molina, and I am the Advocacy and Systems Director of Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA), a member-based alliance of over 20 urban and rural communities across the state of Oregon. OJTA supports SB 747, which directs the Oregon Department of Agriculture to establish basic reporting requirements for fertilizer use. This legislation will provide agencies with the data needed to improve agricultural efficiency and protect drinking water while meeting environmental standards and protecting thousands of Oregonians.

As of today, the state of Oregon does not require any reporting on fertilizer use. This is concerning because fertilizer overuse and improper application can lead to harmful nitrate contamination in water sources, threatening the water that the majority of Oregonians rely on for drinking, particularly in rural areas. Members of our alliance have expressed growing concerns about water contamination. Communities in Eastern Oregon are already experiencing the health consequences of nitrate water contamination. Nitrate contamination has been linked to serious health conditions such as gastrointestinal cancer, thyroid disorders, and more. We must establish fertilizer reporting guidelines to collect data, understand the full extent of nitrate contamination from fertilizer, and develop solutions that protect the health and safety of Oregonians.

The lack of reporting on fertilizer use in Oregon is a significant gap that must be addressed to protect the health of our communities and the environment. By establishing fertilizer reporting guidelines, we can begin to gather key data to assess the extent of nitrate contamination and implement effective solutions. SB 747 also provides technical support and educational services through the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environmental Quality, helping the agricultural industry improve efficiency and reduce pollution in Oregon's drinking water resources.

SB 747 is not meant to burden our farmers; it's about ensuring that the data about fertilizer use is gathered to protect the health and well-being of Oregonians who rely on domestic groundwater for their drinking water, especially those living in rural parts of the state. I urge you to vote yes on SB 747.

Sincerely,
Ana Molina
Advocacy and Systems Director
Oregon Just Transition Alliance