



## **Testimony to the Senate Committee on Rules**

**SB 1154**

**June 9, 2025**

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Water for Eastern Oregon is a nonprofit coalition of local farmers and businesses working with local and state partners to ensure everyone in the Lower Umatilla Basin has access to clean drinking water. Nearly all our members are part of the local food and agriculture industry, and most of our employees also live in Morrow and Umatilla counties. We are deeply invested in the health and wellness of our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide oral testimony during the hearing on June 9, 2025. I would like to provide additional information based on testimony provided at the hearing.

### **1. Oregon Health Authority Response**

As of May 31, 2025, [OHA has tested 2,034 wells](#). 612 of those wells have tested above 10mg/l. OHA is installing reverse osmosis systems in homes below 25mg/l and have installed 249 systems. 224 homes tested above 25mg/l and are receiving water delivery. Umatilla County Commissioner Dan Dorran has testified multiple times before the legislature that if a resident wants clean drinking water, they can get it, thanks to OHA's efforts.

Filters and bottled water are not the sole solution for the basin. The state has developed its [Nitrate Reduction Plan](#) for the LUBGWMA and farmers have been implementing the latest technologies to ensure nitrates are not getting into



groundwater. It is our understanding from experts in the basin that the nitrates we are seeing in groundwater today are legacy nitrates, which found its way to groundwater generations ago. [Aquifer recharge and restoration](#) are a necessity to clean groundwater in the basin.

## **2. Nitrate Trends in the Basin**

[Recent trends analyses conducted by DEQ](#) have shown nitrate concentrations decreasing in some areas and increasing in others. Groundwater quality is not decreasing everywhere in the basin. A strong understanding of the hydrogeology of the basin will allow us to determine why we see decreases in some areas and increases in others.

## **3. Previous Drafts of Bill**

Previous versions of the bill, mentioned by others who testified on the bill, contained repetition of existing agency authority, such as modifying permits and developing rules in the basin. These authorities already exist, and, in fact, have been utilized in the Lower Umatilla Basin over the last several years.

Thank you for considering this written testimony.