



OFFICE OF SENATOR KHANH PHAM

Getting the Facts on Fertilizer Yes on SB 747

Currently Oregon has no data on fertilizer use. SB 747 directs the Oregon Department of Agriculture to establish basic reporting requirements for fertilizer applications on large farms with 200+ irrigated acres, ensuring agencies have the information needed to improve efficiency, protect drinking water, and support agricultural goals through targeted assistance for Oregon's farmers.

The Problem: Overuse of synthetic fertilizers by large industrial farms degrades Oregon's agricultural future, water, and air quality. Because Oregon does not currently collect data on fertilizer use, agencies are unable to strategically support the industry and protect the public health from contamination and pollution.

The Solution – Reporting Fertilizer Use: This proposed legislation closes a fundamental data gap, allowing Oregon's agencies to identify how much fertilizer is being used on which larger operations. This will enable ODA & DEQ to offer technical support and education services, working with producers to use fertilizer more efficiently and reduce agricultural pollution of Oregon's drinking water resources.

Applicability: Which Farms Are Covered?

- Farms with 200+ irrigated acres will be required to report to the Department of Agriculture annually the type of fertilizer used, the crop it is applied to, and the rate at which it is applied for each irrigated field. Fewer than 1/10 of Oregon's irrigated farms are larger than 200 acres, meaning that some 90% of Oregon's farms will be exempted from reporting. At the same time, because the largest farms control a disproportionate amount of land, nearly 80% of Oregon's irrigated farmland will be covered by this policy.

Benefits of Fertilizer Reporting:

Protecting Oregon's Drinking Water: An estimated 80% of Oregonians, primarily in rural communities, rely on groundwater as their source of drinking water. Many thousands of Oregonians are affected by nitrate contamination due to fertilizer leaching from farmland and contaminating aquifers. Nitrate can cause serious health problems like Blue Baby Syndrome, gastrointestinal cancers (bladder, stomach, throat, etc.), thyroid problems, birth defects, & more.

Protecting Oregon's Rivers & Lakes: Surface runoff of fertilizer into rivers, lakes, and streams endangers vital aquatic species like salmon smolt and can spark harmful algal blooms and dead zones in coastal waters, causing harm to ecosystems, recreation/tourism, and fishing industries.

Protecting 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 – this critical greenhouse gas is nearly 300 times more potent than CO₂ and is a major contributor to climate change.

Cost Savings: Fertilizer lost through leaching, runoff, or atmospheric release is wasted, increasing farmers' expenses and raising operating costs. These higher costs put financial strain on farms and can lead to higher prices for consumers. By reducing fertilizer waste, farmers can lower expenses, improve efficiency, and increase profitability.

For more information, contact **Joseph Santos-Lyons, Office of Senator Khanh Pham**, at 503-512-0490.

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