



WATER INSECURITY SOLUTIONS

Healthy Waters for Healthy People

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To: The Honorable Ken Helm, Co-Chair
The Honorable Mark Owens, Co-Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources,
and Water

From: Curtis Cude, Principal, Water Insecurity Solutions LLC

Subject: House Bill 3525 – Requiring Landlords to Test Tenants’ Wells

Co-chair Helm, Co-chair Owens and members of the committee, I am Curtis Cude, Principal of Water Insecurity Solutions where we promote *Healthy Waters for Healthy People* by addressing water insecurity and public health challenges. I am here in support of House Bill 3525 because access to clean drinking water is a fundamental human right and a public health priority. This bill is a crucial step toward improving water security for Oregon communities.

Why HB 3525 Matters

Water security means having reliable access to enough water of sufficient quality for drinking, for producing, cleaning and cooking food, for sanitation and hygiene, and for cultural and spiritual uses. Communities most affected by health inequities are also those most vulnerable to water insecurity. By requiring landlords to test drinking water from exempt wells for arsenic, E. coli, and nitrates, this bill ensures that tenants—many of whom are lower-income or members of marginalized groups—have access to safe drinking water.

Public Health Implications

Unsafe well water poses serious risks. Consider the following:

- **E. coli contamination** can cause immediate and severe gastrointestinal illness.

- **High nitrate levels** are linked to methemoglobinemia (“blue baby syndrome”), increased miscarriage risks, thyroid disorders, and cancer.
- **Long-term arsenic exposure** is associated with poor birth outcomes, developmental defects, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, and cancer.

The effects of contaminated water extend beyond individual health. Families struggling with unsafe water often face additional financial burdens—purchasing bottled water, seeking medical care, or relocating when water quality is poor.

Economic and Public Health Benefits of HB 3525

While some landlords may view this as an added responsibility, **ensuring clean drinking water is an investment in public health and economic stability:**

- **Prevention Saves Money:** Avoidable health conditions from contaminated water cost the state and individuals thousands in medical expenses. Prevention through well testing is cost-effective and reduces strain on the healthcare system.
- **Protects Property Investments:** Water testing and well maintenance help landlords avoid costly emergency repairs, property devaluation, excessive tenant turnover and potential liability from lawsuits.
- **Supports Rural Tenants and Landlords:** Many rental properties with exempt wells are in rural areas, where water insecurity compounds other economic challenges. This bill ensures equity for all Oregonians, regardless of where they live.

Addressing Compliance Concerns

- **Phased Approach for Cost Management:** HB 3525 allows landlords to space out testing, reducing financial burden. Additionally, funding mechanisms could be explored to support landlords, particularly those with lower incomes.
- **Statewide Water Quality Data:** The bill enables better statewide tracking of well water conditions, allowing state agencies to target public health interventions more effectively.
- **Alignment with Oregon’s Water Goals:** HB 3525 supports ongoing state initiatives to ensure sustainable and safe water access, reinforcing our commitment to environmental public health.

By passing House Bill 3525, you are improving water security in Oregon. This is a public health necessity, a sound economic policy, and an ethical responsibility. I urge you to support this legislation to create a healthier, safer Oregon for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis G Cude".

Curtis G Cude, Principal
Water Insecurity Solutions LLC

