

REPRESENTATIVE ANNESSA HARTMAN (SHE/HER)  
HOUSE DISTRICT 40



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazan and Pham, and Members of the Committee,

Over the past two years, I've had the privilege of traveling across the state to learn about the many water issues facing Oregonians. On one visit, I met with families living in the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area—an area that's had major water quality issues for decades. With all the media coverage and state efforts, I thought, surely people would know their water might be contaminated. But the truth is, many renters still had no idea. No one ever told them.

Despite the requirement that landlords provide safe drinking water to tenants, there's nothing requiring landlords to test the water or share results. So, many families are moving in, drinking the water, cooking with it, bathing their kids in it—completely unaware that it's contaminated. One woman told me, "*If I had known what was in the water, I never would have moved in.*" That stuck with me, because people deserve the right to make an informed decision about where they live and how they protect their families. They deserve to know.

That's exactly what HB 3525A does. The bill, with the -10A amendment, requires landlords in designated Groundwater Management Areas to test for dangerous contaminants commonly found in drinking water sourced from domestic wells, including arsenic, *E. coli*, nitrates, and lead—only once every four years if results show contaminants under the EPA's maximum contaminant levels or annually if they're over the limits—and disclose those results to tenants and applicants.

When landlords submit water samples to labs for testing, they'll request that the labs forward the results to OHA as well, allowing OHA to reach out to households with contaminated water that they weren't previously aware of and offer them bottled drinking water and other services. I want to highlight that, compared to the base bill and past iterations that passed out of committee with bipartisan support in 2017 and 2019, the A-engrossed version of this bill has been narrowed significantly:

- First, it no longer contains the requirement to treat or repair contaminated wells.
- Second, it does not have a new cause of action related to test results.
- Third, it requires annual testing only if contaminants exceed EPA limits, whereas past versions required it if there were any contaminants.

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The -10A amendment, which is nearly identical to the -8A amendment, refines the bill even further, narrowing the scope of the bill's applicability to housing units within Groundwater Management Areas and extending the bill's operative date to 2027 to give OHA and the water testing labs time to prepare.

The only difference between the -8A and the -10A is that the -10A fixes a small but important drafting error we found yesterday, changing the bill's current requirement that tenants receive test results "no less than 30 days" after landlords receive them to "within 30 days."

Colleagues, when I first brought this bill forward, I aimed to ensure that every renter in Oregon relying on a domestic well knows whether the water coming out of their tap is safe. That's still my hope, but I'm writing today to ask for your support for this narrowed version because it's a modest but meaningful step to bring truth and transparency to the most impacted communities in our state.

nya:weh (I am thankful)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annessa Hartman".

Representative Annessa Hartman  
House District 40 – Gladstone, Oregon City, North Clackamas County