



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Quicker, More Effective Response to Groundwater Pollution Is Ahead Under Legislation Passed in the Oregon Senate Today

Senate Bill 1154 improves coordination across state agencies and local communities

SALEM, OR – Legislation passed in the Oregon Senate today modernizes the way the state handles groundwater contamination, empowering state and local agencies to curb threats to water quality before it's too late.

"Stakeholders from many different interest groups and industries came together to update our state's responses to groundwater contamination," said **Senator Kathleen Taylor (D – SE Portland & Milwaukie)**. "Oregon's current approach was created by the Groundwater Quality Protection Act of 1989, and thirty-six years has taught our state a lot of lessons in dealing with contamination."

The 1989 law allowed the state to intervene when testing showed signs of serious groundwater contamination, but the process was spread across multiple state agencies with overlapping roles and sometimes unclear responsibilities, making it difficult to act quickly and effectively. Today's measure, Senate Bill 1154, improves how the state works with local communities when groundwater pollution is found, increases coordination, and sets up new steps for action planning and follow-up.

Oregon relies on groundwater for drinking, farming, and daily use. About 70 percent of Oregonians living in rural areas get their water from private wells. When this water becomes polluted—especially by nitrates or other contaminants—it can be unsafe to drink. Common sources of this pollution include fertilizers and septic systems, with contaminants seeping into the ground over time.

The measure passed the Senate in a vote of 18 to 12 and now moves to the Oregon House of Representatives.

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