



April 10, 2017

Representative Ken Helm, Chair
Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Helm and Representatives,

Children First for Oregon is the primary source for data on the wellbeing of Oregon's 860,000 kids. Our program, United for Kids, works with partners like the Oregon Environmental Council, to make Oregon the best place to be a kid.

According to the Oregon Health Authority, every person needs a minimum of 20 liters a day for drinking, cooking, and keeping clean. Analysis of federal data revealed that more than one in five of the nation's water treatment systems fell short of Safe Drinking Water Act standards between 2004 and 2009.¹ As Oregon's population continues to grow at near nationally-leading rates and annual rainfall totals fluctuate wildly,^{2, 3} the state will face greater barriers to ensuring adequate access to clean water for all of its residents.

Access to water is particularly important to the wellbeing of Oregon's families. A family of four, on average, uses 400 gallons of water a day.⁴ Nearly a quarter of those families, and Oregonians on the whole, draw their water from wells.⁵ Federal and state law more heavily regulate municipal water than well water, which means that a contaminated well may go unnoticed for quite some time.⁶ HB 2404 will take important steps toward ensuring that every gallon consumed by Oregon's children and parents is free of potentially fatal nitrate pollution. *Nitrate pollution in water occurs most frequently in rural areas and affects infants most severely.*⁷ Without adequate safeguards such as those listed in HB 2404, the approximately 45,000 annual newborns in Oregon face greater risk of ingesting dangerous levels of polluted water.

We ask you to support HB 2404 and ensure that all of Oregon's families and children have access to water that is tested to be safe for consumption.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Oregon's kids.

Sincerely,

Tonia Hunt
Executive Director
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¹ Charles Duhigg, Millions in U.S. Drink Dirty Water, Records Show, NY Times, 2009, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/08/business/energy-environment/08water.html>

² U.S. Census Bureau, Utah is Nation's Fastest-Growing State, Census Bureau Reports, December 2016, available at: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2016/cb16-214.html>

³ State of Oregon Water Resources Department, April 3, 2017

⁴ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, WaterSense for Kids, available at: <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-kids>

⁵ Oregon State University, Well Water Program, available at: <http://wellwater.oregonstate.edu/>

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ McCasaland et al., Nitrate: Health Effects in Drinking Water, Cornell University, available at: <http://psep.cce.cornell.edu/facts-slides-self/facts/nit-heef-grw85.aspx>