



Kathy Aney/Hermiston Herald

Morrow County Commissioner Jim Doherty collects a water sample from the faucet of Boardman homeowner Tiffany Baldock on Monday, May 9, 2022. A lab will determine if the water is contaminated with nitrates.

# TAINTED

Morrow County Commissioner Doherty says nitrates in Boardman water a threat to life

By PHIL WRIGHT • Hermiston Herald

**M**orrow County Commissioner Jim Doherty is making the water pollution in his county a top priority.

“The nitrate issue in the Columbia Basin has always haunted me,” he said.

When he won election to the county board five years ago, he said he crafted a list of goals, and the nitrate problem was on the list.

“Shamefully that is where the ambition ended relative to the work,” he said. “But in this occupation, the best time to have done something was years ago, the next best time is now.”

When DEQ sent its notice about the whopping port fine of \$1.3 million for nitrate pollution in the upstream aquifer, Doherty said that was a call of alarm he heard to his core.

Discussion and a meeting ensued almost immediately, he said, just as it had for the past 30 years.

“Was this regulatory over-reach?” he recalled. “Who were the primary suspects? Would we

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come together to craft a message of solidarity?”

But Doherty said one voice was absent from that meeting.

“In my view, the greater community were the only ones not present then, nor at any time in the past,” he said, “and I surmised, potentially bearing the biggest burden — that of real and present health concerns.”

He then set out to test what residents were drinking from the end results at the kitchen faucets.

## Tests results, residents deliver bleak picture

The top responsibility of the local public health authority and



Kathy Aney/Hermiston Herald

Lamb Weston at the Port of Morrow, photographed Tuesday, May 10, 2022, provides some of the wastewater pumped to agricultural fields in the Boardman area. The nitrogen-rich groundwater has shown up in wells of residents who draw water from the aquifer.

the board of commissioners, he said, is public happiness and health. His fellow commissioners gave the blessing for Doherty to spend some resources for 100 expedited, if cursory, tests. Commissioner Melissa Lindsay even partnered with Umatilla County Commissioner Dan Dorran on a

bi-county effort to secure a more long-range effort.

“I wasted little time in reaching out to Ana Pineyro, our Public Health Emergency Preparedness coordinator, who has helped me in the past and shines most brightly as a community outreach liaison,” Doherty said.

Morrow County is approaching 50% Hispanic representation and as such, it is vital to have someone like Ana who can bridge that cross-cultural divide.”

They hit the streets with test

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## Abortion views shared locally

Supreme Court draft on Roe v. Wade draws predictable reactions

Hermiston Herald

The leaked draft of the Supreme Court’s majority opinion to overturn the landmark Roe v. Wade case is bright-lining the differences on the two sides of the debate from the halls of Congress down to the local level.

The political journalism company Politico on May 2, published the 98-page first draft on its website. In the draft, Justice Samuel Alito stood in opposition to the 1973 ruling, commenting it,

“Imposed a highly restrictive regime on states.” Later he stated, “The Constitution makes no reference to abortion.”

Oregon Executive Director of Planned Parenthood Advocates, An Do, stood in direct opposition to this claim in a press conference May 3.

“This is about what we care about,” she said. “It’s about the right to privacy, the right to marry who you want.” Do portrayed the dismissal of Roe v. Wade as opening the floodgates to attacking civil rights.

If passed, it will be in the hands of each individual state to address what restrictions they place on abor-

tion. While Oregon most likely will stay pro-abortion, Planned Parenthood is looking to expand into Ontario, anticipating a mass surge of patients across the Idaho border.

In a press conference, Lisa Gardener, CEO of Planned Parenthood in Southwestern Oregon, made it clear that expansion into Eastern Oregon is imminent, but how soon is unknown.

Idaho Gov. Brad Little has made several attempts to pass fetal heartbeat laws that would make it virtually impossible for abortions to occur in the state. Planned Parenthood brought

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Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Sharon Buchanan, of Catholic Daughters of the Americas, holds up a sign Oct. 3, 2021, during a Life Chain event. She was one of around 30 anti-abortion protesters near downtown Hermiston, on both sides of Highway 395. Politico on May 3, 2022, leaked a draft of the Supreme Court’s majority opinion to overturn the landmark 1973 case.

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