



DOULAS LATINAS
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Doulas Latinas International

April 7, 2024

Chair and Members of Environmental Justice Council

Doulas Latinas International (DLI) is a non-profit organization that was found and works with Latino and People of Color communities and partners since 2006. DLI has opened its office in Eastern Oregon and have worked with Latino communities, in particular with pregnant mothers, babies, and families since 2018. Our programs have goals that support our mission and vision that Every child/baby deserve to be a healthy adult". In 2014 we created the Doulas Latinas culturally and linguistically program to train and certify community doulas to enter the Traditional Health Workforce of Oregon. Our Perinatal Education classes are about a healthy perinatal period, prenatal, birth and postpartum. Our Health Literacy program includes educational classes (Charlas con Confianza) to include themes on Tobacco prevention and Well Water nitrate contamination, vaccines, COVID-19, among other topics, such as Diabetes Prevention. We outreach and organize rural and suburban Latino families of 18 different Latino countries of origin.

Regarding the nitrate well water contamination Doulas Latinas are concerned with:

- a) Effects of higher levels of nitrates on pregnancy, newborn, future health, including preterm births and miscarriages due to conception of contaminated water with excessive levels of nitrate. Below is a true story shared by our Doulas Latinas Eastern Oregon Coordinator told by a Latino mother who lives in a rural city, nearby to our office.

"As we finished a in person class about issues of tobacco prevention and nitrate contamination of well water in the LUBGWMA area, a young Latino woman came up to me and said, "Now I know why I lost my two babies." I asked her why she was telling me that and she explained: "We use to live in a house outside of Boardman and that house had well water. During the time we lived there we wanted to have a child, I got pregnant twice and lost both of them soon after. I was very sad and had to move out there. At the new house to where we moved in there was water from the city. I got pregnant again and this baby was

born. She told me demonstrating to be calm now, that she hadn't lost her baby because of her. I was hurting from the loss and the lack of knowledge.”

b) Issues on treatment and/or installation and substitution of filters

The LUBGWMA project began officially one year ago in 2023. However, there were already several families with has had asked for testing the water of their well, and they were placed to receive treatment of the water and installation of filters so they can continue to use their wells. Because of the lack of enough equipment and personnel for installation, a definition and decision was made by the authorities to serve whom had requested for water analysis in first place. Nevertheless, low income people, less educated and who face lack of access to the knowledge regarding the nitrate issue, several who needs it were placed in the end of line to receive the installation of a filter in their homes.

c) Safety of our personnel who goes to the field to work with the OHA and ODHS staff for outreach and education of people living in these rural areas of high contamination of well water with nitrates.

Asks:

- 1- Need for urgent studies and official research in Oregon, regarding the places with high levels of nitrate that might be contaminating the local water, regarding to pregnancy, newborns, breastfeeding, preterm babies and or miscarriages.
- 2- How can we make justice and equitable actions regarding to the distribution and installation of home filters with maintenance for everyone that needs it in first place, not by when they have asked for testing of the water.
- 3- Definition and determination, besides safety trainings, for protection and safety of our staff and volunteers working in the fields.

Once again, I would like to say thank you very much for this opportunity to bring this information and share real stories of our Latino-Indigenous communities who are working and living in these high levels of nitrate contamination of the well water in eastern Oregon,

Best regards,

Sandra Hernandez, M.Ed., Ph.D

Executive & Programs Director

Doulas Latinas International

sandra@doulaslatinainternational.org

CC: Hoang-Van Nguyen, Environmental Justice Council & Policy Coordinator