

# News Release

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State of Oregon  
Department of  
Environmental  
Quality

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## **Editors:**

**DEQ staff in the field will be available for interviews May 28. To arrange meeting with staff, contact Jennifer Boudin (541) 686-7838, ext. 235.**

For release: May 23, 2002

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## **DEQ Launches Second Phase of Groundwater Study In Southern Willamette Valley**

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), in collaboration with other agencies, has embarked on the second phase of a project to evaluate the quality of groundwater in the southern Willamette valley between Eugene and Albany. Sampling is scheduled to begin May 28.

About 100 private wells will be sampled over a three-month period. The work will be made possible by continued voluntary participation of area residents who had elevated levels of nitrate detected during DEQ's first phase of sampling conducted in 2000 and 2001. This summer's study will include an analysis of pesticides and other compounds, as well as a repeat of nitrate analysis.

This investigation will provide additional knowledge about the condition of area well water. The compounds being assessed can be used as indicators of overall groundwater quality. Data collected in the past show that groundwater in some areas in the valley may have levels of nitrates that may be a concern if they are in drinking water.

Elevated nitrate levels can be a health risk to infants and pregnant women and can also indicate the potential vulnerability of well water to other contaminants. The nitrate contamination may come from several sources, including fertilizers, septic systems, animal feedlots, industrial wastes, and food processing waste.

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