



Rockwood Water
People's Utility District

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January 22, 2019

Senator Monnes-Anderson, Chair
Senate Health Care Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 27 – Oregon Health Authority Drinking Water Fee Proposal

Dear Chair Monnes-Anderson,

The State Legislature and water industry professionals recognize that the Drinking Water Program through the Oregon Health Authority is a critical function for the health and safety of our citizens and the economic vitality of our state.

The Oregon Health Authority Drinking Water Program has experienced largely flat funding support from the State for at least a decade. With the State's share towards the program static, Federal contributions to the program based on a percentage of State support have followed this trend. Stagnant funding from the state and federal government have largely led us to the funding shortfall the program is facing today

Support for the OHA Drinking Water Program is a statewide issue. As a statewide issue, it should receive general fund support since the largest exposed populations are the small water systems who do not possess the technical and financial means to contribute much to the support of this critical state program.

Water providers should not have to shoulder the entire cost of this important State program. Water industry professionals are more than willing to contribute a fair share to ensure the program remains viable and responsive to meeting the drinking water quality challenges of today and into the future. The Drinking Water Program has relied on fee for service in the past. With the new proposal, providers are unsure of what new services are being provided from these new fees.

We encourage the State to consider an equitable fee from water utilities in the State to contribute towards the program. It would be anticipated that the State would continue to be a partner in this program's support and viability. The approach outlined appears reasonable but needs to outline clearly how these additional funds will be accounted, what programs are going to be supported and not result in the shifting of general fund dollars away from this critical statewide effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and perspective on this very important statewide program!

Sincerely,

Brian R. Stahl, General Manager
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