



January 23, 2019

Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Senate Bill 27 – Proposed Oregon Health Authority, Drinking Water Program fees

Dear Senator Monnes Anderson and Committee Members,

The following points represent The City of Hillsboro's response to Senate Bill 27, the proposed Oregon Health Authority, Drinking Water Program fees.

- Hillsboro remains supportive of the OHA's Drinking Water Program and its mandate to protect public health through access to safe, reliable drinking water.
- To invest in safe drinking water for the long-term, an increase in dedicated general funds is the most appropriate pathway to support the OHA's mission.
- Consistent with past communications, an additional investment by the Governor's office and the legislature of \$2 million in dedicated general funds would be an appropriate starting point.
- Hillsboro would like to see a commensurate increase in services and assistance to water providers regulated under OHA for support of these fees. Examples of improved services include the following:
 - Better defined processes and approval timeline for water providers when presenting data and literature supporting an alternative option to meet OHA requirements, such as the recent process by the Oregon Water Utilities Council to allow ozone for pre-filtration (i.e., intermediate) disinfection credit. This has been an ongoing item since 2017 with no conclusion to-date, and several water providers across the state are beginning design work or considering treatment upgrades using this widely accepted technology.
 - Streamlining the review process for OHA required Operator Certifications. There have been several instances of delayed applications resulting in under certified operators as well as the loss of qualified employees in some instances. Further consideration for overlapping disciplines (i.e., treatment vs. distribution) should also be reviewed as many systems have operators performing both functions.

- These fees represent an annual increase from \$2,400 to \$13,500 for Hillsboro based on the current system categories.
- In addition, systems that have partnership-based water supplies may be assessed fees more than once. This could include the Joint Water Commission as a “wholesaler without distribution,” which is a regional water supply agency providing high quality drinking water to its member agencies which include the Cities of Hillsboro, Forest Grove, Beaverton and TVWD.

If a fee system is implemented to provide sustainable services from OHA, then an associated increase in dedicated, general funds is the most equitable path forward to provide clean drinking water to all Oregonians who rely on this vital resource, whether at home, at work, or during travel across the state.

Thank you for considering these comments. We can be reached at the contact information below for follow-up questions if needed.

Sincerely,

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