



MELISSA CRIBBINS
COUNTY COMMISSIONER

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March 3, 2019

TO: The Honorable Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources

FROM: Melissa Cribbins
Coos County Commissioner

RE: **Senate Bill 756**

Coos County offers this testimony in support of SB 756. SB 756 is a bill to provide an additional two million dollars of funding to the Department of Environmental Quality to award grants for developing and administering loan programs to provide low-interest loans for the repair, replacement, upgrade or evaluation of residential or small business on-site septic systems. This bill continues the operation of an important tool for counties in our continued effort to protect the public health of this citizens of Oregon and mitigate code violations.

Since this program was created in 2016, we have received several stories from citizens about how this program has allowed them to make septic repairs they thought would otherwise be impossible on their limited income. Recently, we were working with the Department of Environmental Quality on a code enforcement issue that involved a homeowner that could not afford to repair his septic tank, but would likely end up homeless if we forced him to repair the septic or move. During discussions with the DEQ, we determined that this individual was eligible for the Clean Water Loan program. While we are still working with this homeowner, we are confident that the program will keep him in his home, and this is an option that would not have been possible prior to the Legislature's actions in 2016 when this program was created. This is an invaluable tool to Coos County in fixing failing septic tanks, and one that protects the environment, public health, and some of our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your time, and the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Melissa Cribbins
Coos County Commissioner