

February 10, 2020

The Honorable Ken Helm
900 Court St. NE, H-374
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,


Oregon's water infrastructure is in bad need of repair. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave our state's water infrastructure a C- and our wastewater infrastructure a D. According to a 2016 report from the League of Oregon Cities, there are \$7.6 billion worth of water quality and water supply infrastructure needs in Oregon over the next 20 years.

Failing water infrastructure is a threat to public health and the environment and I believe that closed procurement processes utilized by many local governments that are a threat to progress on necessary modernization of our water infrastructure. Time and time again, competition has been proven to drive down costs where monopolies have the adverse effect. Closed procurement processes for water infrastructure prevents competition for piping materials and grants monopolies to predetermined winners. I believe HB 4043, by allowing for open competition in water infrastructure projects where state dollars are involved, will help make those projects' price tag more manageable and, therefore, will make those projects more doable. Multiple studies have shown this to be the case.

I grew up on a dairy outside of Eagle Point. I participated in Future Farmers of America, and was junior leader of his 4-H club. Safe to say I know about soil and I know soil can be corrosive to iron pipes. Given that fact, it does not seem to make sense for some local governments to mandate the use of iron for water infrastructure when other materials may be better suited for the conditions. HB 4043 will give local governments the power to match material to the project which should also save taxpayer dollars.

I support HB 4043 because it will give more freedom to local governments to choose the best materials for the job. I support HB 4043 because, by allowing materials to openly compete with each other, local government will realize real cost savings. I support HB 4043 and hope that you will do the same.

Sincerely,



Jack L. Esp

cc: Members of the House Committee on Water