

Submitter: Scott Fleury

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and
Water

Measure: HB3125

Representative Ken Helm, Chair

Representative Annessa Hartman, Vice-Chair

Representative Mark Owens, Vice-Chair

Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources &
Water

Dear Chair Helm; Vice-Chair Owens; Vice-Chair Hartman and Members of the
Committee:

The Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies, the League of Oregon Cities and
the Special Districts Association of Oregon appreciate the opportunity to submit
testimony in support of HB 3125. This legislation will provide necessary funding for
the continuation of Oregon's Low-Income Water & Sewer Assistance Program.

Drinking water and sewer rate affordability has been a long-standing challenge,
further compounded by the pandemic. Water and sewer infrastructure investments
are absolutely critical for the protection of public health and the environment, as well
as for public safety (including fire suppression), community livability, housing supply
and economic development. As a result of decreasing investment from the federal
government, combined with the rising cost of infrastructure, the local cost impacts
(i.e. water/sewer/stormwater rates) associated with necessary water-related
infrastructure has become unaffordable for many Oregonians.

In 2021, for the first time ever, federal funding was made available to states for low-
income water and sewer rate assistance. Oregon received just over \$14 million and
was able to utilize the federal investment to stand up this new program. The program
has been highly successful but will run out funding within the current calendar year.
We appreciate the committee's consideration and urge your support for HB 3125. If
you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Michael
Martin (mmartin@orcities.org).

Sincerely,

Scott Fleury PE
Public Works Director

City of Ashland