



## **BAKER CITY, OREGON**

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February 14, 2023

Representative Ken Helm, Chair  
Representative Annessa Hartman, Vice-Chair  
Representative Mark Owens, Vice-Chair  
Committee Members

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members:

The Baker City Public Works Department is in support of HB 3125. As the Public Works Director for the past 16 years I have seen the challenges that some in our community have had paying the utility bills. The one-time Federal funding made available in 2021 to assist with utility payments made a significant difference here. In speaking with our Cashier recently she noted that she personally knew of over 40 families who had utilized that funding, allowing them to stay current and keep the water on at their homes. That's huge!

Small cities have the same requirements as large cities in providing clean drinking water and treating wastewater. These requirements are expensive and often lead to rate increases. As a small city we simply have fewer people to pass those costs onto causing the potential for sharper rate increases. Now, more than ever, with inflation and other post-COVID challenges there is a need for rate-payer assistance.

Thank you for considering this testimony and I urge you to support HB 3125.

Sincerely,

*Michelle Owen*

Michelle Owen  
Public Works Director  
541-524-2031