



February 13, 2023

Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Hartman, Vice-Chair Owens, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of United Community Action Network (UCAN), I would respectfully ask you to support House Bill 3125, which will establish the Public Drinking Water and Sewer Ratepayer Assistance Fund, distributing much needed state financial assistance for water and sewer bill payments to help ensure low-income households have access to safe drinking water.

UCAN helps with many of the basic needs of low-income people in Southwest Oregon. Our clients find food, housing, energy assistance, weatherization help, WIC and more through the caring staff here at UCAN.

In 2021, through federal funding, our organization received \$768,857.10 to provide financial assistance for low-income individuals and families for their drinking water and wastewater bills. In a short amount of time, we have set up 18 agreements with community water systems and wastewater systems in our community. As of today, we have spent \$263,759, assisting 876 households locally.

House Bill 3125 will build on the hard work undertaken to establish a program to distribute water and sewer bill payment assistance by investing state resources. It would use lessons learned from the federal program and expand access to Oregonians currently ineligible for assistance, including low-income Oregonians living in multi-family dwellings whose utilities are bundled with rent.

In closing, we would ask you to support House Bill 3125 and build on the success of the existing program that has been providing an essential service to many low-income Oregonians. In our community, we are committed to helping prevent individuals from losing access to safe drinking water and wastewater.

Thank you,

Shaun Pritchard
Executive Director