



CITY OF KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON

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Sister City
ROTORUA, NEW ZEALAND

March 7, 2023

Representative Helm, Chair
Committee Members
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Subject: Testimony in Favor of House Bill 3231—a Bill to Direct and Fund the Department of Environmental Quality, in Consultation with other State Agencies, to develop recommendations and outreach resources that expanded development of beneficial reuse and land application projects in Oregon

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

The City of Klamath Falls fully supports House Bill 3231. It will provide the funding needed and the direction to DEQ to consult with other state natural resources agencies and wastewater utilities like ours to identify regulatory impediments that are unnecessarily deterring development of water reuse and other beneficial land application projects. Something we urgently need.

For over two decades the city has supplied treated wastewater for cooling tower use at a nearby Cogeneration plant; helping them be more sustainable and drought resilient. This is just one of the excellent examples of the environmental and economic benefits of using treated wastewater for beneficial purposes in our State.

When our wastewater discharge permit was renewed in 2020 by DEQ we found ourselves facing stringent nutrient and wintertime temperature limits. Temperature limits so stringent that we will need to cool our effluent during the winter if we continue discharging to the Klamath River.

We are currently studying the feasibility of implementing a broader beneficial reuse program. The city would prefer to implement a sustainable, broader beneficial reuse program that provides a resilient source of water to those in desperate need of recycled water for beneficial use. The city is investing in this study to find feasible alternatives for beneficial use of the effluent. The study considers the tradeoffs between a non-sustainable solution like cooling towers to the more sustainable option of beneficial water reuse. We have the support of the city council, the local agricultural community and the Klamath Irrigation District. They want our resilient source of water, but the regulations are such that our effluent, even when treated to the highest recycled water standards, cannot be conveyed in their irrigation canal system and would thus require a costly pipe network. The city needs viable water reuse options and the willingness of DEQ and other state agencies to work with the city to find ways to protect the environment and allow sustainable beneficial reuse projects.

It's frustrating as a municipality that resides in an area of persistent drought that has a water commodity that it can't use due to the restrictive requirements. We believe HB3231 will provide needed funding and direction to DEQ that will help our community realize the benefits of utilizing treated wastewater used for its highest and best purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark W. Willrett, P.E.
Director of Public Works