



City of Falls City  
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## Testimony on behalf of Falls City's Water System Project

The city of Falls City is currently working on a large and vital wastewater infrastructure project. The \$5.7 million wastewater treatment facility construction project will enable the community to finally decommission a facility that has been deemed failing by DEQ for the past several years. Though efforts to upgrade this infrastructure have been ongoing for the past 5 years, the city's water infrastructure is equally in dire need of upgrades due to its age and brittle state.

The initial request for infrastructure funding from the city of Falls City in 2022 was part of Business Oregon's Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Letter of Interest for the most urgent and highest priority needs of the city's aging system. Though only \$2,367,300 was requested, the 2017 Water Master Plan included work estimated at \$7,092,653. Those costs in 2023 dollars amount to \$ 8,470,092 (inflation adjusted in 2023).

- For background, the original distribution system was installed in 1915. Though major improvements to the system were made in the 1990s, a large portion of the system is still AC (Asbestos-Concrete) pipe, which is more prone to break, especially under high pressure conditions compared to the current industry standard of PVC (polyvinyl chloride piping) and PEX (polyethylene cross-linked) piping .
- Portions of the downtown area have pressures far in excess of recommended ranges to provide adequate pressure to the homes in the higher elevations of the city.
- Falls City experiences frequent water main breaks due to these high pressures, the age of the pipes, as well as natural settling on ground, impacting our ability to serve our community with safe drinking water.
- The project also includes some minor maintenance at the reservoir in the water treatment plant, which has suffered some tank structural damage due to its age.
- Finally, as the end-user service meters have not been replaced in more than 20 years, which is longer than their recommended life spans, the city needs to upgrade this vital infrastructure component, as it directly impacts our ability to charge accurate fees to the residents.

Sincerely,

**Falls City Mayor**  
**TJ Bailey**