



CITY OF CLATSKANIE

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez; Members of the Committee:

This letter is to reaffirm the City of Clatskanie's Capital Construction ask of \$6 million from the legislature to fund the soil preparation work needed for our new Wastewater treatment plant project.

Why do we need the money? Two years ago, the City received from the State \$10 million in ARPA money to build the new plant. We began the preliminary work on the project and during the Geotech assessment, we found the soil to be liquefiable. This means, during a seismic event, it will turn to mush. We can't build the new plant unless the soil is properly shored up. The estimate given to the city is \$6 Million, thus the ask. We do not have the funds to build both the Wastewater Treatment Plant and do the soil prep work. We need these additional funds. If we do not get the additional funds, then our \$10 million award from 2 years ago will be for naught.

Why the ask and not finance? Clatskanie is a community of 1700 people. Our Low-to-moderate Income index is 56%. Over one half of the students attending the elementary school are eligible for the back-pack lunch program. A just completed housing study shows that the renters in Clatskanie, 72% of them, spend more than the customary one third of their income on housing. Clatskanie has the highest share of low-income families (earning just \$25,000 a year or less), in Columbia County at 44%.

One of the big issues facing Oregon, as you all well know, is affordable housing. Not only the cost to buy a house and housing inventory but let us not forget the ongoing costs to operate the house. This includes utilities. Were the City to finance this \$6 million ask, we would have to place an additional \$30 to \$ 35 per month for 20 years on everyone's utility bill. This is too great a burden to ask of a community with the highest percentage of low-income families in the county.

Please help us. Our current plant, built in the 1970's is experiencing structural failure and we have been fined by DEQ. We must replace the plant, and we can't do that unless we get this \$6 million ask.

I attended the Ways and Means public hearing on May 3rd 2023, and due to the large number of people who signed up to testify, I was not selected to do so in the time allotted for testimony. This letter to the committee is the essence of what I was going to testify about. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Hinkelman".

Greg Hinkelman

City Manager