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January 31, 2025

To: Sen. Jeff Golden, Chair and Sen. Todd Nash, Vice-Chair Members of the [Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire](#)

RE: [SB 830](#) - Grants for onsite septic systems - Support

Verde is a community-based organization dedicated to building environmental wealth through organizing, advocacy, and social enterprise. We are writing to express our strong support for SB 830, which will help protect public health and prevent groundwater contamination by expanding the Onsite Septic Financial Aid Program and broadening funding eligibility. This bill will make the financial assistance we advocated for in HB 2168 last week more accessible to low-income and rural communities disproportionately affected by failing septic systems.

SB 830 strengthens the DEQ-managed Onsite Septic Financial Aid Program by introducing grants, fostering partnerships, and expanding eligibility to include multi-family and affordable housing projects. While the program has supported over 510 septic repairs across 29 Oregon counties in the past three years, many low-income residents still struggle to afford even low-interest loans. By incorporating grants and extending aid to larger septic systems—such as those in manufactured home parks—SB 830 will create accessibility to the program and help safeguard water quality and ensure safe, stable housing for vulnerable Oregonians.

Advance State Goals and Priorities for Protecting Public and Environmental Health

This legislation aligns with the [Water Justice Policy Action Framework \(WJPAF\)](#) developed by the Oregon Water Futures Collaborative, supporting key state priorities on public health and water affordability. Specifically, SB 830 advances the following goals:

- **Expanding federal and state funding for water infrastructure projects:** By broadening eligibility to include low- and moderate-income rural households, residential housing providers, and both residential and commercial property owners, SB 830 ensures more communities can access critical septic system repairs.
- **Funding programs to test, repair, and replace household-level infrastructure, including wells and septic systems:** By expanding eligibility, SB 830 increases the impact of financial aid programs, allowing for more septic system repairs that protect both public health and the environment.

Protecting Public Health & Preventing Groundwater Contamination

Failing septic systems pose serious risks to public health and groundwater quality. Leaking systems can introduce contaminants such as nitrates and manganese into drinking water sources. By funding essential septic system repairs, SB 830 will play a vital role in protecting both Oregon's water resources and the well-being of its communities.

We urge you to support SB 830 to ensure that all Oregonians—especially those in underserved and rural areas—have access to safe water and sanitation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Roselyn Poton
Water Justice Coordinator, Verde