



**City of Gearhart**

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Gearhart, Oregon 97138  
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March 30, 2025

**Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner**  
**Co-Chair Representative Tawna Sanchez**  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Testimony in Support of Funding Through House Bill 5006**

Dear Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the City of Gearhart, I respectfully submit this testimony in support of critical infrastructure investment through House Bill 5006.

Gearhart is a small but growing coastal community in Clatsop County. While our charm and natural beauty continue to attract new residents and growing numbers of tourists each year, this rapid growth has created significant pressure on our city's aging infrastructure and public services.

We face a unique set of challenges. Gearhart's permanent tax rate remains low, limiting our general fund revenues and our ability to meet escalating infrastructure demands. At the same time, our water systems are interconnected with neighboring cities that require shared resources to accommodate their own housing and development needs. This regional interdependence—while necessary—further stretches our resources and complicates planning and delivery.

Moreover, population growth in Gearhart has far exceeded the estimates provided by Portland State University's Population Research Center, putting unexpected strain on our police, fire, and public works departments. As a result, administrative capacity is increasingly consumed by urgent operational needs.

Gearhart is also in the early phases of planning for the replacement of our combined fire and police station—an essential facility originally constructed by community volunteers in 1958. As we work to modernize this vital infrastructure to meet current and future public safety demands, we are concurrently navigating the pressures of underfunded water projects, including:

- **New Filtration Skid Unit** – to increase water production capacity and extend the life of our current system. (\$1.2 million unfunded)
- **Highway 101 Pipe Replacement** – to replace undersized and outdated asbestos cement and PVC pipelines. (\$3.71 million unfunded)
- **Hillila Loop Construction** – to improve fire flow and water pressure along a critical corridor. (\$390,000 unfunded)

These infrastructure improvements are essential for protecting our residents, sustaining future growth, and ensuring regulatory compliance. But without outside support, our small city lacks the revenue base to fund these projects independently.

House Bill 5006 represents a significant opportunity to help communities like Gearhart not only catch up to current needs but also prepare responsibly for the future.

We urge you to prioritize funding that supports small, rural cities who are doing everything they can with limited resources. Your support will directly improve the safety, resilience, and livability of our community.

Thank you for your consideration and service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

**Chad Sweet**

City Administrator

City of Gearhart