



April 16, 2025

Testimony to Ways & Means Joint Committee:

Chair Lieber, Sanchez, Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, Smith, and Honorable Senators, Representatives,

My name is Lily Morgan, I have had the honor of serving with most of you. Thank you for your service to Oregon. I am now the City Manager in the beautiful City of Gold Hill, celebrating our 130<sup>th</sup> year incorporated. We are the site of the second largest village of the Takelma tribe, now represented by the Siletz and Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. We care deeply about honoring the tribal heritage of our community. We have such a significant presence of archeological presence and every project we do, includes having cultural representatives to oversee soil disturbance.

This is going to seem technical but I can assure you, we see the faces of each person impacted by what I am going to share.

Gold Hill is comprised of approximately 1345 people, around 545 homes, and 60% of the community is below the median average income of Oregon. This is significant, as the cost to improve our infrastructure is beyond what our community can afford via loans or rate increases.

A recent water rate study concluded that our current water rates do not cover any capital reserve funding for infrastructure improvements and our operational costs exceed the revenue. We are \$10.62 over the Oregon affordability rate for our area for monthly water rates. Yet the water rate study recommends up to a 42% increase over the next five years.

Just today, I learned that the sewer rates provided by a local service district will be increasing up to \$113 a month due to infrastructure improvements.

Our rate study states we must make up to \$10,000,000 improvements in the next 5 years to continue to provide adequate services. Without this, we are facing being unable to provide water to our existing housing. We have three pending housing projects that are dependent on our water supply.

So many communities in Oregon are facing infrastructure needs. We have seen costs go up with the pending tariff impacts. We have all submitted survey's for the water caucus and I know you have tough decisions ahead of you.

In a community that already is above affordable, we cannot do this without legislative help.

We are asking for support on capital infrastructure funding for our water project as well the funding for the Rogue Valley Sewer Service project. Gold Hill needs your help and we appreciate your time. Thank you