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February 5, 2026

Subject: Support for SB 1585 – City of Powers, Coos County, Oregon

Senate Committee on Commerce & General Government,

I am writing on behalf of the City of Powers to express our strong support for SB 1585. This bill represents one of the most meaningful steps the Legislature can take to ensure Oregon's small cities remain safe, functioning, and viable.

The reality for communities like Powers, and others in Oregon, is that infrastructure costs continue to rise at a pace that far outpaces our revenue capacity. With a population of only 715 folks and an annual budget of less than \$1.5-million, every dollar must be carefully allocated and prioritized. We rely on a narrow property tax base, limited state and federal resources, and utility rates that are already on the verge of being unaffordable for our residents, many of whom are already economically disadvantaged.

Because of these constraints, current match requirements often make it impossible for us to even apply for grants, even when the project is critical to public safety or basic functioning. In the past two years alone, we drafted applications for emergency response and energy resilience projects—projects that would have strengthened our disaster readiness and safeguarded essential services at our water treatment facility. We were ultimately unable to submit them, solely because the matching funds required under existing rules were unattainable.

For a city like ours, accumulating the required local match would take years of targeted savings, delaying or outright preventing essential operations or projects. Creating new revenue streams in a small, rural community is equally difficult. This forces us into a position where we must delay maintenance, postpone safety upgrades, and watch our infrastructure slowly deteriorate—not due to lack of planning or effort, but because *the financial structure of many state grants unintentionally disadvantages the very communities that need them most*.

This bill helps correct that imbalance by setting reasonable, population-based match caps, which are often prohibitively expensive for small jurisdictions. This is not a request for a handout. It is a request for an equitable funding structure that recognizes the drastically different fiscal realities between Oregon's largest and smallest cities. Folks often forget that small communities are held to the same standards as large cities—many times without a comparable budget to work within, straining existing staff and resources to their limits to provide essential services to residents.

We fully recognize that reducing match requirements may affect statewide grant pools. But without action, small cities will continue to fall further behind, facing infrastructure failures that cost far more to fix later and compromise the health, safety, and economic stability of our residents. The decline in small communities has a destabilizing effect to larger communities in the region. This bill offers a practical, targeted solution—one that will preserve public dollars by enabling early intervention and long-term planning, rather than emergency response to crises that could have been prevented.

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On behalf of the City of Powers, I urge your support for SB 1585. It is a smart, measured investment in the future of Oregon's small communities and the residents who depend on us to provide safe, reliable, and resilient public infrastructure.

Respectfully Submitted,



Stephanie Patterson  
City Recorder