



# City of Coos Bay

The Largest City on the Oregon Coast

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*Office of the City Manager*

**February 23, 2026**

House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Support for Senate Bill 1585 – Grant Match Relief for Small Cities**

Chair Sosa, Vice Chairs Chaichi and Osborne, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Coos Bay, I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 1585.

Small cities across Oregon face significant and unavoidable infrastructure obligations — water, wastewater, stormwater, streets, and public facilities — while operating within limited and often inflexible revenue structures. Our communities rely heavily on competitive state and federal grants paired with user-based revenues. For cities with lean operating budgets and modest tax bases, assembling large local match requirements can mean delaying critical projects, stretching funding packages over many years, or deferring essential infrastructure altogether.

This is not a matter of insufficient planning or lack of local commitment. It is a matter of scale.

SB 1585 recognizes that scale matters. By establishing proportional match caps for smaller jurisdictions, the bill aligns state investment with local fiscal capacity while preserving meaningful local participation. Just as importantly, allowing grant funds to support planning, engineering, and project development reflects the real structure of infrastructure delivery in small communities. For us, pre-construction costs can be as significant and as prohibitive as the construction phase itself.

SB 1585 does not remove local responsibility. Rather, it ensures that state partnership is practical, accessible, and effective. It allows communities like ours to move projects forward responsibly, leverage outside investment efficiently, and safeguard public dollars through well-planned, timely execution.

For Coos Bay — and many similarly situated cities — this legislation would create immediate, tangible benefits by accelerating infrastructure improvements that protect public health, support housing development, and strengthen economic vitality.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 1585. We respectfully urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Nichole Rutherford'.

Nichole Rutherford  
City Manager