



City of St. Helens

265 Strand St., St. Helens, OR 97051
Phone: (503) 397-6272 Fax: (503) 397-4016
www.sthelensoregon.gov

February 24, 2026

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

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

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

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 1585. On behalf of the City of St. Helens, I appreciate your consideration of this important legislation.

Like many small communities across Oregon, we face significant and unavoidable infrastructure needs while operating with limited and inflexible revenue options. We depend heavily on competitive grants and user-based revenues to fund capital improvements. For a small city with a lean operating budget, setting aside large match amounts often means delaying projects, piecing together funding over many years, or foregoing critical infrastructure work altogether. This is not a matter of poor planning—it is simply a function of scale and tax base.

Senate Bill 1585 addresses this challenge in a practical and proportional way. For communities like ours, the proposed match caps recognize fiscal reality while still ensuring meaningful local commitment. Just as important, allowing grant funds to be used for planning, engineering, and project support reflects how infrastructure projects actually function in small jurisdictions. Pre-construction costs can be just as burdensome as construction itself, and without assistance for those phases, many projects never move forward.

SB 1585 does not eliminate local responsibility. Rather, it makes state investment workable for small cities that lack the tax base of larger jurisdictions, while safeguarding public dollars and encouraging timely, well-planned projects. This approach strengthens accountability and improves the likelihood that projects will be completed efficiently and responsibly.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 1585. I respectfully urge your support. This policy change would have a real and immediate impact on small cities across Oregon that are striving to maintain essential infrastructure in a responsible and transparent manner.

Respectfully,

John Walsh
City Administrator
City of St. Helens