



February 27, 2026

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Starr, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Central Point, I respectfully urge your support for HB 4161 which provides a common-sense clarification to Oregon ethics law by allowing a public body to provide food and beverages to public officials during meetings, official events without those items being treated as 'gifts'.

Oregon's ethics laws are critically important. They exist to ensure public trust, prevent undue influence, and maintain the integrity of public service. The City of Central Point fully supports those goals. However, recent guidance and interpretations have created uncertainty around routine, government-hosted meetings and events where modest refreshments are provided as part of conducting public business.

For cities, many meetings occur during meal hours, extended work sessions, emergency response briefings, regional coordination meetings, and community events. Providing coffee, water, or a simple meal during these meetings is not about personal benefit; it is about efficiency, accessibility, and the practical realities of governing. Treating these minimal refreshments as "gifts" has created confusion and administrative burden for cities and local officials who are simply trying to carry out their duties.

This bill clarifies Oregon's ethics standards and ensures that public officials can participate fully in meetings and official functions without fear that a cup of coffee or a slice of pizza provided by their own public body could inadvertently trigger an ethics violation.

For local governments working hard to serve their communities, this clarity is both practical and necessary.

Thank you for your consideration, and we respectfully ask for your support of HB 4161.

Sincerely,

Chris Clayton

City Manager, City of Central Point