



2/8/2023

Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Hartman, Vice-Chair Owens, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of ACCESS, I would respectfully ask you to support House Bill 3125, which will establish the Public Drinking Water and Sewer Ratepayer Assistance Fund, distributing much needed state financial assistance for water and sewer bill payments to help ensure low-income households have access to safe drinking water.

As the Community Action Agency for Jackson County, ACCESS provides food, warmth, and shelter to promote stability for vulnerable populations.

In 2021, through federal funding, our organization received \$605,000 to provide financial assistance for low-income families for their drinking water and wastewater bills. In a short amount of time, we have set up 14 contracts with local water vendors and wastewater vendors in our community. As of today, we have spent \$151,245, assisting 590 households locally.

House Bill 3125 will build on the hard work undertaken to establish a program to distribute water and sewer bill payment assistance by investing state resources. It would use lessons learned from the federal program and expand access to Oregonians currently ineligible for assistance, including low-income Oregonians living in multi-family dwellings whose utilities are bundled with rent.

In closing, we would ask you to support House Bill 3125 and build on the success of the existing program, that has been providing an essential service to many low-income Oregonians. In our community, we are committed to helping prevent individuals from losing access to safe drinking water and wastewater.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe Vollmar".

Joe Vollmar  
Housing Director  
ACCESS