

February 18, 2024

To: Chairs Holvey and Girod And Members of the Joint Committee
On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capitol Construction

I am writing to reiterate my (very short!) testimony for HB5201, which would provide funding support for the Carlton city sewer project. Community infrastructure projects are the most critical projects for any city, while also being the most ignored...until the waste water is flowing down the middle of the street. This is the story for the city of Carlton.

With approximately 16,000 feet of clay sewer pipeline installed in 1928 and an additional 2,000 feet of cast iron force main line, our city's sanitary service is beyond the end of its life. Carlton has for the last decade been working to gather the funding to replace these lines, but it's difficult to get folks excited about wastewater—until the lines to your house have backed up, as mine did this fall due to a broken original clay section in the city service line.

Over the last five years my neighbors have seen their wastewater bills increase 6 to 15 percent annually – the greater portion of each increase targeted for replacement of the sewer lines. Carlton has a well-earned reputation as one of the central sites of Oregon's wine industry, but our median household income is \$69,256. Young families and retired seniors living on a fixed income make up much of our population. Over the last 5 years, and looking ahead, those wastewater rate increases are projected to continue increasing at 6% per year for sewer, and 4% per year for water (which will fund replacement of older water lines and installation of fire flow service level for the area adjoining our elementary school). Our citizens and our businesses are being stretched to the breaking point.

The folks in Carlton have been trying to solve this problem, but there comes a time when we have to turn to our government for assistance, and for Carlton, that time has come.

Sincerely,

Linda Watkins

Linda Watkins, Mayor