

February 17, 2024

RE: Support of HB5201 Carlton Sewer Project

Chairs Girod and Holvey and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB5201 funding the Carlton Sewer Project. The City of Carlton's wastewater system is among the most important services that we provide to our community and is a critical element for the City to prosper and thrive.

The City has nearly 16,000 feet of clay sanitary sewer pipe constructed in 1928 and 2,000 feet of 1950's cast iron force main that needs critical replacement. These pipes are the cause of a significant amount of inflow/infiltration into the system contributing to a hydraulic overload of the treatment plant, resulting in over 70 permit violations between 2011 and 2018. There have already been pipe collapses and sink holes in the State Highway 47 as well as other locations in the community. Most recently, the pipe broke in one location causing a sanitary sewer overflow in a front yard, on E. Main St. and eventually into Hawn Creek. The repair work showed that there was a 4-inch hole in the pipe from corrosion. Based upon the condition of the pipe, it is expected that there will be more breaks in the line with wastewater spills in the near future. These are health and safety concerns, and it is expected that these emergency situations that we have feared will continue to the detriment of our community's health, environmental and economic sustainability.

The total estimated cost is \$11.4 million. The City of Carlton is already conducting significant infrastructure improvements, including our transmission line, plant upgrades, and reservoir work. As a result, in the last five (5) fiscal years, the citizens of Carlton have already sustained substantial rate increases:

- FY20 Water 8.1%, wastewater 15%
- FY21 Water 7.1%, wastewater 15%
- FY22 Water 3.8%, wastewater 12%
- FY23 Water 4.3%, wastewater 6.0%
- FY24 Water 6.0%, wastewater 6.0%

Sum of 5 Year Total Increase 83.3% with an average annual rate increase of 16.66%

Furthermore, the projected 5-year increases are 4.3% per year for water and 6% per year for wastewater. With a Median Household Income of \$69,256, these substantial increases to Carlton residents are a difficult burden. Carlton is a growing hub of the winery industry and investing in replacing our failing infrastructure will allow the community to grow and businesses to thrive in Carlton, creating a healthy and prosperous community.

Carlton has done everything they can to seek to obtain alternative funding and solutions to these funding challenges for this essential infrastructure. I strongly urge you to support funding for HB5201 Carlton Sewer Project. The benefits of this project cannot be overstated, and I believe that investing in our infrastructure is a critical step towards a brighter, more prosperous future for all of us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Thompson-Rizer

Carlton City Councilor