

**HB 3527 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water**

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**Prepared By:** Anna Glueder, LPRO Analyst

**Sub-Referral To:** Joint Committee On Ways and Means

**Meeting Dates:** 2/17

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

The measure establishes the Public Drinking Water and Sewer Ratepayer Assistance Fund (Fund) and directs the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (Department) to provide grants from Fund moneys to qualified organizations to distribute water and sewer bill payment assistance to low-income residential households. It directs the Department to adopt rules for the administration and implementation of Fund distribution and appropriates \$15 million General Fund moneys to the assistance program. The measure takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2021, during the COVID-19 public health emergency, the U.S. federal government provided \$11.44 million to Oregon, to assist low-income households with costs associated with the provision of water and wastewater services costs. Funded through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Public Law 116-260) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 (Public Law 117-2), the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) provided over 18,000 low-income households in Oregon with bill-payment assistance for their past-due and current water and wastewater services expenses. LIHWAP funds were dispensed through the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department and expired in 2024.