

## HB 3527 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

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

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**Action Date:** 03/24/25

**Action:** Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.  
(Printed A-Eng.)

**Vote:** 8-1-0-0

**Yeas:** 8 - Boice, Hartman, Helm, Levy B, McDonald, McLain, Owens, Scharf

**Nays:** 1 - Marsh

**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued

**Revenue:** No revenue impact

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

**Meeting Dates:** 2/17, 3/24

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#### WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the Public Drinking Water, Stormwater 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, sewer, and stormwater 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 \$11 million in General Fund moneys to the assistance program. The measure takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

#### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Available federal funding for ratepayer assistance programs

#### EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment **includes stormwater** in the bill payment assistance program.

#### BACKGROUND:

In 2021, during the COVID-19 public health emergency, the federal government provided \$11.44 million to Oregon to assist low-income households with costs associated with the provision of water and wastewater services. Funded through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Public Law 116-260) and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-2), the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) provided over 18,000 low-income Oregon households 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.