



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

January 21, 2025

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Re: House Bill 2168

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

HB 2168 instructs the Oregon State University Service to establish a program for aiding households that rely on wells for drinking water or on septic systems for wastewater treatment. It would appropriate moneys to the Water Resource Department (WRD) and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) into a Water Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement Fund and Low Interest Loan Program, respectively.

Deschutes County, through its governing body, requests support for HB 2168. Like many areas in Oregon, the Upper Deschutes basin is experiencing groundwater declines. In addition, the La Pine subbasin is vulnerable to nitrate loading from conventional onsite wastewater systems. If adopted, HB 2168 would leverage existing partnerships between Deschutes County, WRD, DEQ, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, and NeighborImpact.

County staff, including Community Development Director Peter Gutowsky and Onsite Wastewater Manager, Todd Cleveland, are available to further articulate our request.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Deschutes County Board of Commissioners

Anthony DeBone
Chair

Patti Adair
Vice Chair

Phil Chang
Commissioner

CC: Senators Anthony Broadman, Diane Linthicum, and Mike McLane
Representatives Emerson Levy, Jason Kropf, E, Werner Reschke, Vickie Breese-Iverson, and Mark Owens