



February 12, 2025

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens
House Agriculture, Land Use and Water Committee
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 3121 Support -- Written Testimony

The Oregon Association of Water Utilities (OAWU) has been the City of Monmouth's go to source for water and wastewater operator training and technical assistance for more than 30 years. Their Circuit Riders, Source Water Specialist, Trainers and Technical Assistance providers continue to be Monmouth's, and Oregon's, best resource for on-site (boots on the ground) technical assistance. In addition to their in-the-field technical assistance, OAWU's free and for-fee training and conferences brings together the best of the industry's subject matter experts for effective and relevant classroom style training.

OAWU field staff have day-to-day experience in trouble shooting, providing assistance and responding to questions and emergencies all over the state with every system type and style of water and wastewater system. Their strength is that they build relationships with system managers and operators, they are the subject matter experts, and are willing and able to respond quickly to the needs of water and wastewater system operators. Simply stated, OAWU's ongoing support for water and wastewater systems is critical and matters.

The City of Monmouth is excited to partner with OAWU on implementing a Water Operator Apprenticeship Program. Monmouth has agreed to provide Oregon's first candidate for the water operator apprenticeship program. While the program is still being developed, we believe strongly in workforce development, and the value of an apprenticeship program that strengthens Oregon's future system operators. We are excited to see OAWU's workforce development and training center become a reality.

Monmouth supports HB 3121, and believe it to be an efficient and effective use of state funding. This investment provides much needed assistance and training for the small and very small water systems who provide water to much of Oregon's rural communities. HB 3121 will assist these systems with being good stewards of Oregon's precious water resources, combating cyber and other security threats, protecting rate payer and legislative investments in infrastructure, and responding to an ever changing regulatory environment.

Thank you for your forethought, leadership, and support for HB 3121.

Respectfully,

Russell Cooper
Public Works Director

Matt Johnson
Water Operations Manager

Mark Landau
Wastewater Operations Manager

