



Representative Ken Helm, Co-Chair
Representative Mark Owens, Co-Chair,
Representative Sarah Finger McDonald, Vice Chair
Members of the House Agriculture, Natural Resources, Land Use and Water Committee

The Association of Oregon Counties offers this letter in **support of House Bill 3121.**

House Bill 3121, if passed, would allocate \$2.5m to implement the small community water systems program. The bill would direct DAS to contract with the Oregon Association of Water Utilities to provide technical assistance to address the needs and vulnerabilities of small and very small community water systems. The contract would also require the Association of Water Utilities to construct and procure the necessary equipment for a water utility training center to provide any technical, financial, or managerial support that may be needed to help address not only water supply reliability, source and treated water quality, utility board and operations management, infrastructure, workforce development, safe drinking water standards, and emergency preparedness.

In a survey conducted of small and very small water systems by DHM Research just last year, the most urgent need for small and very small water systems was for infrastructure upgrades. This was primarily due to the current aging infrastructure they use that causes significant funding challenges. Distribution, supply and treatment infrastructure investments are critical to meet the future demands they will face in the coming years.

There are approximately 3,321 public water systems in Oregon and the majority of them fall under small community water systems. In Oregon, the small community water systems serve anywhere from 4 to 14 service connections on commercial or public premises that are used by 10 to 24 people for at least 60 days per year. These small community water systems provide drinking water for roughly 3,330 people every year. These systems have regulatory oversight by the local county health departments and the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

As Oregon continues to work toward the expansion of housing throughout the state, ensuring the small community water systems are not left out is critical.

HB 3121 will provide these small community water systems the needed assistance to continue to operate and provide reliable clean water for those that use them.

AOC encourages the committee's support of House Bill 3121.

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