

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

From: Kathleen Walker, City of Sandy

Date: February 14, 2025

Re: Please Support HB 3527

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Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

The City of Sandy respectfully asks that the committee support HB 3527, which would establish the Public Drinking Water and Sewer Ratepayer Assistance Fund (PDWSRAF). This state-supported fund would continue the important work of Oregon's Low- Income Water & Sewer Assistance Program as the federal funding for that program ends in 2023.

Sandy is one of the fastest growing cities in Oregon, but our drinking water infrastructure is aging, deteriorating, and unable to meet our community's future needs. In addition, we have outgrown our decades-old wastewater system and have been mandated by regulatory agencies to improve our sewer infrastructure. We are currently undertaking the largest capital projects in our city's history to address these challenges. Unfortunately, the scope of our projects and the high cost of construction has required us to substantially increase utility rates for our water and wastewater customers.

Our community is feeling the burden of rising water and wastewater bills, especially in this inflationary environment. Financial assistance for ratepayers, like that proposed in HB 3527, is acutely needed and would be of great benefit to families in Sandy and throughout Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding the City of Sandy's infrastructure projects and the challenges our city is working to address.