



February 17, 2025

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

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

The Special Districts Association of Oregon represents approximately 950 districts across the state. Our membership is composed of 32 different types of districts, several of whom provide drinking water to the citizens of our state. The League of Oregon Cities, representing 241 cities across the state. The Oregon Association of Water Utilities is a nonprofit, independent association of water and wastewater utilities that was established in 1977 to represent water utilities' interests in the state legislature and provide onsite technical assistance. Combined our associations provide municipal drinking water and wastewater services to a majority of citizens in the state and we would like to express our support for HB 3527, that would provide assistance to ratepayers who struggle to afford their utility bills.

Water and wastewater services are a basic need. In 2021, for the first time, the federal government made available to states funding for low-income water and sewer rate assistance because those services were considered critical in the country's attempt to limit the spread of the COVID virus. Oregon received just over \$14 million and was able to utilize those federal funds to stand up a new program that was highly successful but has run out of money.

The assistance proposed under HB 3527 would provide critical support to low-income Oregonians who have high home water bills and arrears that threaten both their access to water and their housing stability. Water bill payment programs meet a critical need especially for those with the highest home water burdens, meaning they pay the greatest proportion of their income towards their home drinking water and/or wastewater services.

Thank you for your consideration and please support HB 3527.

Sincerely:

Mark Landauer - Special Districts Association of Oregon
Michael Martin - League of Oregon Cities
Jason Green - Oregon Association of Water Utilities
Jerry Linder – Association of Clean Water Agencies