



February 17, 2025

Chair Helm, Vice-Chair's Owens and MacDonald, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of ACCESS, I would respectfully ask you to support House Bill 3527, which will establish critical assistance for low-income families who are struggling to pay their water bill and are at risk of being disconnected from this basic necessity.

As the Community Action Agency for Jackson County, ACCESS provides food, warmth, and shelter to promote stability for vulnerable populations.

In 2021, our organization received \$605,000 in federal funding, enabling us to provide financial assistance to 1,410 low-income families for their drinking water and wastewater bills. Through this program, we successfully established 17 contracts with local water and wastewater vendors, ensuring critical support for our community. With the expiration of the federal program last year, this statewide investment is essential to bridging the gap and continuing much-needed assistance for low-income Oregonians.

House Bill 3527 builds on the foundation of this work by investing state resources into a sustainable water and sewer bill assistance program. It leverages lessons learned from the federal initiative while expanding access to currently ineligible individuals, including low-income Oregonians in multi-family dwellings where utilities are bundled with rent.

We urge your support for House Bill 3527 to build on the success of the federal program and continue providing this vital service. Our community remains committed to preventing individuals from losing access to safe drinking water and wastewater services, ensuring stability and dignity for those in need.

Thank you,

Joe Vollmar

Joe Vollmar
Chief Operations & Housing Officer
ACCESS