



Melissa Radcliffe
City Administrator

(541) 332-3681 555 20th Street PO Box 310 Port Orford, OR 97465

March 3, 2025

House Committee On Higher Education and
Workforce Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 3634 – Operator-in-Training and Water Workforce Program

Dear Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala & Harbick, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the City of Port Orford Oregon, we express our strong support for House Bill 3634, which establishes the Water Workforce Program (Operator-in-Training) to address the critical need for drinking water and wastewater operators.

Port Orford has been in a water curtailment for years due to our unreliable water system. We have many issues at every phase, yet none is more pressing than finding qualified, certified operators in our Water and Wastewater treatment plants. Hiring certified professionals in rural areas is nearly impossible. We are trying to “grow-our-own” but that takes years and monetary resources we don’t have. We cannot support the Governor’s Housing initiative if we can’t have citizens hook up to our water system!

Reliable water infrastructure is essential for public health and community well-being, yet we are facing a growing crisis as a significant portion of the water and wastewater infrastructure workforce nears retirement. Without trained replacements, Oregon risks disruptions to safe drinking water and wastewater services. HB 3634 is a proactive and practical solution to recruit, train, and retain skilled professionals in this vital field. We also appreciate the leadership of the Legislature’s Water Caucus in championing investments in workforce development, and this committee’s willingness to hold a public hearing addressing this critical issue.

We urge your support for HB 3634 and stand ready to collaborate on its implementation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Vileisis

Port Orford Mayor

Email: avileisis@portorford.org

Melissa Radcliffe

Port Orford City Administrator

Email: mradcliffe@portorford.org