

Submitter: Mayor Bette Keehley  
On Behalf Of: Heard Farms SB956  
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB956

From the City of Oakland:

The City of Oakland is a small historic town incorporated in 1878 providing services to approximately 450 homes and 950 people located in Douglas County, Oregon.

In addition to our citizens, we provide support services to the Oakland Rural Fire District, Oakland Unified School District, Douglas Fire Protection Agency and an additional 2500 residences in the surrounding area. The City of Oakland has become the primary resource for water, sewer and emergency services equipment in Northeast Douglas County.

The City's water system waste basin is directly connected to the sanitary sewer via the collections system in keeping with State of Oregon DEQ and OHA regulations. Since the Archie Creek Fire the increase in unprocessed waste water and sludge must be handled by our sewer plant. This situation compounds our need to dispose of double the amount of sludge since before the fire.

Heard Farms has been the primary sludge hauling contractor for the City of Oakland for over 20 years. The cost of sludge hauling to a licensed DEQ facility is a fraction of the cost to purchase additional equipment and land to complete the essential processing of sludge.

To complete the sludge process the City would need funding for engineered plans, the acquisition land for facilities and equipment to process the sludge to Class A level, the only level accepted by a landfill.

The cost of a screw press and drying bed or an alternative reed bed, to replace Heard Farms service, would cost approximately \$3,600,000 to implement. The payment on a \$3,600,000 loan would be approximately \$180,000 per year, based on a 4% interest rate.

State and Federal regulations along with rising costs have resulted in Oakland having some of the highest water and sewer rates in the County. A typical Oakland utility customer currently pays a combined water/sewer rate of \$150.77 per month per household. \$3,600,000 over the expected 20-year life of the system divided by our approximate 425 utility customers could cost an additional \$35.29 per month per home. This would bring the standard monthly payment to \$186.12 for a single family dwelling within the city limits. The increase could have a critical impact on our largely retired community. It is difficult to absorb such a large increase on a fixed income.

Heard Farms is the only viable solution in existence that meets the three requirements of the City which are: to comply with State and Federal regulations, to accommodate the waste sludge within an existing operational budget and to provide a solution that operators can manage.

We urge the passage of SB 956 because it will fundamentally benefit Oakland as well as 20 or more small cities struggling to maintain facilities and provide utility service with affordable cost to their citizens.

Warm Regards

Mayor Bette Keehley

City of Oakland, Oregon