

Submitter: Tim Kirsch  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and  
Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1189

Good afternoon, Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, Senators, and committee members. My name is Tim Kirsch, and I am proud to serve as the Mayor of Mill City. I'm here today to support the North Santiam Canyon Sewer Project for Mill City and Gates and SB 1189.

Mill City is a strong community still working hard to recover from the wildfires of 2020. This sewer project is critical because it helps our community rebuild and protects the North Santiam River. Mill City's current sewer plant is at the end of its useful life, outdated, does not meet current Clean Water Act standards, and urgently needs replacement. Our community of only 1,600 people cannot afford to replace it without support.

We have been fortunate that the Oregon legislature appropriated \$50 million in ARPA funding, a once-in-a-generation funding opportunity, for a new sewer treatment facilities. The new facility will significantly enhance water quality and ecosystem health, benefiting our local environment and wildlife.

Without this critical support, a project of this scale would be impossible for small communities like Mill City and Gates. SB1189 ensures we can fully utilize this ARPA funding before it expires in December 2026 by allowing construction to start while DEQ resolves the legal conflict between its Three Basin Rule and the Supreme Court's Maui decision.

SB1189 includes important safeguards, ensuring we get all the permits required by law. It clearly states the plant cannot operate or release any wastewater until DEQ provides the final permit. This guarantees the new plant will meet all necessary environmental standards while safeguarding the legislature's generous investment in our efforts to rebuild our community.

Here is our project timeline:

Start building: June 1, 2025

Start testing machines: April 1, 2026

Start testing the treatment process: May 15, 2026

Finish the plant: November 1, 2026

Last request for ARPA money from Business Oregon: December 1, 2026

Thank you very much for your time and support.

Tim Kirsch, Mayor

City of Mill City