



## **Public Testimony in Support of House Bill 3939**

**Submitted by Judy Erwin, City Manager, Burns**

**Date: April 7, 2025**

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and  
Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 3939. My name is Judy Erwin, and I am the City Manager for the City of Burns. I am writing today to express our city's strong support for this vital legislation, which will provide critical infrastructure funding to support housing development in rural Oregon communities.

The City of Burns currently has two transformative housing projects that will directly benefit from HB 3939: the Miller Springs development and the Palmer Estates subdivision. Together, these projects represent a significant step forward in addressing our community's housing shortage while fostering economic growth and improving quality of life for our residents.

### **Miller Springs Development**

The Miller Springs project is poised to deliver much-needed workforce housing to Burns. With \$2.8 million already contributed by the Regional Rural Revitalization Strategies Consortium (R3) toward vertical construction, this project is ready to move forward but requires infrastructure funding to complete critical horizontal improvements such as water, sewer, streets, and utilities. The \$3 million allocated to Burns in HB 3939 will enable us to overcome this barrier and ensure that these homes are built for families earning up to 130% of the area median income (AMI).

### **Palmer Estates Subdivision**

The Palmer Estates subdivision is another cornerstone project for Burns and Harney County. This phased development includes 106 lots offering a mix of single-family homes, duplexes, and multi-family housing units. The project also features 8 acres of preserved wetlands and a 2.2-acre linear park, creating a sustainable and attractive community for current and future residents. However, like Miller Springs, Palmer Estates requires significant infrastructure investment to proceed. The funding provided by HB 3939 will allow us to construct the necessary water, sewer, and street improvements to bring this ambitious project to life.

Both projects align with Oregon's broader goals of increasing affordable housing options in rural areas while supporting workforce development and economic stability. By passing HB 3939, you will not only help address Burns' immediate housing needs but also lay the foundation for long-term growth and prosperity in our community.

## **Addressing Critical Sewer Infrastructure Needs**

Recent flooding from the Silvies River has severely damaged Burns' sewer system, creating a public health hazard and underscoring the urgent need for infrastructure investment. Floodwaters have overwhelmed our wastewater system, causing sewage backups into homes and streets. This situation has not only disrupted daily life but also jeopardized public health due to contamination risks.

House Bill 3939 funds are essential not only to support housing developments like Miller Springs and Palmer Estates but also to shore up critical sewer infrastructure damaged by the flooding. This investment will help us repair and upgrade our wastewater system to ensure it can meet current demands while supporting future growth. Without this funding, our ability to recover from this disaster and move forward with housing projects will be significantly hindered.

## **Conclusion**

House Bill 3939 represents a lifeline for Burns as we work to recover from recent flooding and address long-standing infrastructure challenges that have stalled housing development for years. By passing this bill, you will not only help our city rebuild critical systems but also create opportunities for sustainable growth through new housing projects that benefit current and future residents alike.

On behalf of the City of Burns, I urge you to vote in favor of HB 3939. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information about these projects or their impact on our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Judy Erwin".

Judy Erwin, City Manager

City of Burns