



**North Santiam
Sewer Authority**

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P.O. Box 256
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Mill City, OR 97360

April 15, 2025

Co-Chair Representative Ken Helm
Co-Chair Representative Mark Owens
Vice-Chair Representative Sarah McDonald
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Re: Support for Senate Bill 1189 – North Santiam Canyon Wastewater Project

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and members of the Committee:

As Chair and Vice-Chair of the North Santiam Sewer Authority, Mayor of Mill City and City Council member for Gates, we are writing to express our strong support for SB 1189.

Gates and Mill City are resilient communities still working hard to recover from the devastating wildfires of 2020. The North Santiam Canyon Sewer Project is crucial because it supports our community's recovery efforts and helps protect the North Santiam River. Gates currently lacks modern wastewater treatment infrastructure, we operate entirely on septic systems. Our small communities of 400 and 1600 respectively, simply do not have the resources to build a sewer system without assistance. A modern wastewater treatment facility and collection system will enhance our environment and public health.

We are incredibly grateful that the Oregon legislature appropriated \$50 million in ARPA funding, providing a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our communities to build essential wastewater treatment facilities. This new infrastructure will



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significantly enhance water quality and ecosystem health, benefiting our local environment and wildlife.

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

SB1189 includes important safeguards, ensuring we secure all required permits. It explicitly prohibits plant operation or wastewater discharge until DEQ issues the final permit, guaranteeing that the new plant meets all environmental standards and responsibly uses the legislature's generous investment.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

Tim Kirsch
Chair, North Santiam Sewer Authority
Mayor, Mill City

Emily Scofield
Vice-Chair, North Santiam Sewer Authority
Councilor, City of Gates City Council