

My name is Sherrie Rininger, a resident of John Day for 12 years, Business Owner, and currently serving as Mayor of the City of John Day.

I'm reaching out to talk about an issue that affects every household in John Day and Canyon City — our shared wastewater treatment plant. Our current facility has been holding on by a thread for years. It is over 70 years old, the concrete infrastructure is crumbling, and some of the equipment is no longer made, thus cannot be replaced. For over 15 years, we've been out of compliance with Oregon DEQ's permit — and FEMA has identified the plant's location as a floodplain, meaning we need to move it entirely.

After nearly a decade of effort — environmental studies, engineering, community outreach, and fundraising — we're finally ready to break ground on a new treatment plant. The latest cost estimate is \$30 million. That's after more than a year of value engineering to bring it down from a potential \$35 million or more.

To cover the costs, sewer rates will nearly double to \$140/month — a heavy burden on families in our rural community. Our staff has chased every possible grant and funding opportunity, and now the only major source left is through legislative earmarks.

We're asking for your help — not just to fund a plant, but to protect our public health, our environment, and the future of our communities.