



OREGONLIVE

The Oregonian

OREGONIAN MEDIA GROUP

April 23, 2025

Senator Jama/Members
Oregon State Senate Committee on Rules
Salem, Oregon

Chair Jama and Members:

I submit this supplemental written testimony in support of Senate Bill 686.

Please see below example of AI-produced search result copy generated by scraping/ingesting content produced by The Oregonian/Oregonlive. The summary and detail text below is a machine-generated restatement and republication of our journalism without the addition of any original work. The embedded photo is, in fact, our staff photography scraped and embedded into this machine-produced derivative.

The links to our original work have been reduced to a bibliography function used to build credibility for the search site to obfuscate the need for a user to consume content on our sites where we can generate revenue to invest in continued reporting.

Calling SB686 a “link tax” is a cynical spin by large platforms to smear this effort by labeling it a “tax,” obscuring the fact that they continue to progressively usurp value from our content, credibility, and audience engagement. Their use of AI in this example is a further step in the direction that shows their intent to accelerate their plans, regardless of the damage to local service journalism.

SB686 is a lifeline to continued original reporting on communities across Oregon.

Sincerely,

John Maher
President



washington county sewer district hawaii clean water services



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AI Overview

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Washington County's Clean Water Services, an independent sewer district, has faced scrutiny due to its lavish spending practices, including trips to Hawaii for board meetings and conferences. The agency's captive insurance company in Hawaii, which handles some of their insurance needs, has been a point of contention, with some reports suggesting it's been used for executive perks and to shield spending from public scrutiny. Washington County officials are now seeking to improve transparency and accountability following investigations and public outcry about the spending.



Here's a more detailed look:

Lavish Spending and Hawaii Trips:

- The Oregonian/OregonLive revealed that Clean Water Services executives, including the CEO, have taken frequent trips to Hawaii, including five-star resorts, for annual board meetings and conferences.
- These trips, including first-class airfare and premium accommodations, have been paid for by the captive insurance company, which is separate from the agency's budget.
- Some reports indicate that the 2023 Hawaii trip cost nearly \$42,000.
- The trips are not fully transparent, with some details, like the costs of four other Hawaii trips, remaining undisclosed.

The Captive Insurance Company:

- Clean Water Services formed a captive insurance company in Hawaii in 2016.
- Hawaii's captive insurance program is attractive because it allows for more flexibility in insurance arrangements.
- While captive insurance companies can be legitimate, they can also be used to obscure spending or avoid scrutiny.
- Some questions have been raised about the structure and operations of the captive insurance company, including the identities of its board members and whether they

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Clean Water Services

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