



# City of North Bend

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Tuesday, May 6, 2025

## House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Chair Tran, Vice-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and Members Boice, Evans, Skarlatos, and Watanabe:

Thank you for hearing me. I'm David Milliron, City Administrator for North Bend, and I ask you to give SB 1062A a do-pass.

Last winter our sanitary sewer crews slid a camera into an eight-inch clay pipe laid in 1948. On the screen we saw spider-web cracks and a thin ribbon of sewage six feet above the Coos Bay tide line. When that pipe ruptures, there will be no press release—just raw waste where our kids dig for clams.

That pipe is not alone. Thirty-nine percent of our network is more than 70 years old, and the plant has not had a major upgrade since 1991. Our sewer fund is headed for insolvency because we can only afford patch repairs.

The damage reaches far beyond the pipe. Oregon now scores every city on hitting its state housing-production targets, and we are already falling behind. We soon will be unable to sign off on the new apartments and starter homes our South-Coast families need as the plant nears its capacity limit. As the proposed Pacific Coast Intermodal Port moves forward, and airline traffic soars, we may be forced to freeze all new sewer taps at the Airport Business Park—including a planned hotel—unless we add capacity.

Why are we stuck? A 2020 charter change—passed by a simple majority—now demands a *double-majority* of all voters before the council can raise sanitary-sewer rates at all, and it caps any hike at the Social Security COLA—currently at 2.5 percent. One sentence wiped out the state-granted duty you gave us to keep this regulated utility safe.

SB 1062 A is the narrow fix. It restores local authority—nothing more—for three coastal cities, costs the state nothing, and leaves every councilor fully answerable at the ballot box. With that power our governing body will move in clear, planned steps—so families can budget and our bay can stay clean.

I urge you to please give SB 1062 A a do-pass. The next time that sanitary sewer camera goes underground, let it show a pipe our children can trust—not the warning we all ignored.

Thank you; I welcome your questions.

Sincerely,

David A. Milliron  
City Administrator  
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