



City Manager's Office
925 S. Main Street
Lebanon, Oregon 97355

TEL: 541.258.4969
www.lebanonoregon.gov
ron.whitlatch@lebanonoregon.gov

May 7, 2025

The Honorable Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Rob Nosse, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Letter of Support for Capital Funding – Lebanon Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades

Dear Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Nosse, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means on Capital Construction,

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

On behalf of the City of Lebanon, I respectfully urge your support for a \$20 million appropriation in the 2025–27 state budget to fund critical capacity improvements at our municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant. These upgrades are essential for maintaining the health, safety, and sustainable growth of our rapidly expanding community.

Lebanon experienced the 12th largest population increase in Oregon in 2023 and continues to see increasing demand for housing and municipal services. Our city has worked hard to prioritize strategic, affordable housing development, and we have achieved positive, tangible results, including eliminating Lebanon's multi-year status as a "severely rent burdened" community in 2023.

However, as our growth trend continues our wastewater treatment facility is nearing and - occasionally performing - at its operational limits. Without prompt infrastructure investment, we risk halting future housing development and compromising our ability to meet environmental regulations and public health standards.

Based on our most recent wastewater master plan, three interdependent projects are urgently needed:

1. Construction of a new oxidation ditch to replace the aging aeration basin (\$18 million)
2. Installation of an additional large-diameter secondary clarifier to relieve capacity bottlenecks (\$12 million)
3. Construction of a new administration building, safely relocated away from the digester that has already caused two hazardous overflows (\$8 million)

These infrastructure upgrades are essential to accommodate future population growth and help the city maintain alignment with the Governor's housing production goals.

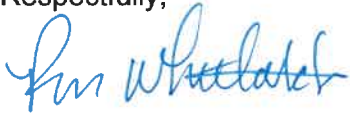
The total estimated cost of these improvements is \$38 million. The City of Lebanon has already committed \$18 million in local funding toward this project. We are requesting the remaining \$20 million from the Legislature to fully fund these urgently needed improvements.

Lebanon's size and growth track put our city in a challenging spot – we no longer qualify for many Federal or rural infrastructure programs due to those factors, yet we cannot match the capital resources of Oregon's larger metropolitan areas. Without state assistance, Lebanon would be forced to finance the project through debt, placing an additional undue burden on our residents—whose median income is 31% lower than the state average—by raising utility rates. This is especially concerning given that Lebanon currently has the 5th highest utility rates among 25 surveyed cities in the Mid-Willamette Valley.

We respectfully urge the Joint Committee on Ways and Means to include this project in the state's capital construction budget. This investment will ensure Lebanon's infrastructure keeps pace with our growth and advances the State's housing objectives, while protecting public health and maintaining affordability for our citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this vital request.

Respectfully,



Ron Whitlatch
City Manager/City Engineer
City of Lebanon