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David Sykes, Commission Chair
Jeff Wenholz, Commissioner
August Peterson, Commissioner

May 9, 2025

Dear Chair Girod, Chair Nosse, and Members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction:

RE: SB 5531 – Morrow County Nitrate Water Project \$2,858,012

I am writing in support of SB 5531, particularly in consideration of project funding for critical infrastructure that will provide clean, safe drinking water to residents living in unincorporated areas of Morrow County. As you may know, the northern part of our county is part of the Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area formed in 1990 due to the high concentrations of nitrate in the groundwater. National media has compared the water quality to Flint, Michigan. While state agencies and regional coalitions continue to study the causes and possible solutions, thousands of residents live with unsafe drinking water and must depend on water delivered in bottles.

Morrow County has several unincorporated communities that are dependent on unregulated, domestic wells which are impacted by high levels of nitrate. The West Glen community is an example of such. It is located immediately south of the City of Boardman and has over 100 residential properties. This project would install a community water distribution system, serviced by the City of Boardman, which would eliminate the nitrate issue that the West Glen community faces. This project can be a pilot program for how state, county, and local agencies can work together to on the nitrate issue.

I ask for your support of SB 5531 and the funding associated with the Morrow County Nitrate Water Project. It's time to put the water bottles away and put pipe in the ground . Your approval of the \$2.8 million dollar request in SB 5531 will help show the State's commitment to clean water for our residents in the LUBGWMA.

Thank you and I appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Matthew Jensen
County Administrator