



March 11, 2025

On behalf of the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce, please accept this letter of support for the funding request submitted by the South Suburban Sanitary District (SSSD) to help pay for required upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant that currently serves approximately 23,000 citizens in our officially designated disadvantaged community.

These upgrades are mandated by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) to comply with new permit requirements that must be completed by October 2026. The current lagoon system cannot meet the stricter nutrient removal standards for nitrogen, phosphorus, and ammonia prescribed under the new NPDES permit #100700. Without these upgrades, future discharges are projected to exceed the limits allowed under the new permit, potentially impacting the health of Lake Ewauna and the Klamath River ecosystem.

The estimated cost of these mandated upgrades is approximately \$83 million. These costs are solely for upgrades to the wastewater treatment process required to meet new permit requirements, not for any other purpose. SSSD has demonstrated exceptional financial responsibility, having accumulated over \$10 million in reserves to contribute toward the project. In addition, a low-interest \$2.9 million loan from Business Oregon further reduces the outstanding funding need to \$70 million.

The proposed upgrades include the installation of a Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) treatment system, disinfection improvements, recycled water capabilities, biosolids processing facilities, influent pump station improvements, headworks improvements, and existing treatment lagoon rehabilitation. These improvements will ensure treated effluent meets Class A standards for reuse, benefiting local irrigators, downstream water rights holders, and the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge.

Wastewater treatment is one of the four essential pillars for housing development, commercial and industrial expansion, and community growth, alongside water, electricity, and roads. Limiting any one of these pillars will negatively impact our small, rural community's ability to maintain and expand in these crucial areas, particularly housing.

Our organization exists to support the needs of our 600 business members, as well as the broader business community in Klamath County. Ensuring adequate wastewater treatment capacity is essential to supporting business growth, expansion, and relocation efforts.

I join with our Economic Development entity and our Klamath County Commissioners in their unanimous support for this funding request. We respectfully ask that you do the same to help protect our environment, promote sustainable growth, and ensure the well-being of our community.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Harter", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Heather Harter

Executive Director

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