

February 9, 2026

Chair Mark Meek
Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and General Government
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR. 97301

Chair Meek and Members of the Committee:

The Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) represents approximately 950 districts with 32 types of districts across the state that play a crucial role in delivering essential public services to our citizens, including fire protection, water supply, sanitation, libraries, parks and recreation, ports, irrigation and more.

While we appreciate the intent behind this legislation, SDAO opposes SB 1585 for a simple reason. This bill will provide small, incorporated cities lower matching requirements to be eligible to access several state grant programs. Many of our members rely on the same programs, in some cases to leverage federal matching funds to address their infrastructure challenges in the communities they serve. Unfortunately, under this proposal special district are not included for these lower matching rates. As a result, we believe that this an equity and fairness issue. If lower matching requirements are good for Oregon's small cities, we believe that special districts should receive the same treatment.

I should note that special districts are very limited in their abilities to raise revenue compared to cities. Furthermore, over 350 of our 950 members operate with annual budgets of less than \$100,000.

I do want to thank Senator Manning and Matt Keating for taking the time to listen to our concerns and committing to include Special Districts and Counties in 2027 should this bill pass this short session. We also recognize that time is short during even-numbered sessions. However, we simply cannot support a bill that will provide one sector of local government preferential matching treatment over another local governmental entity. As a result, we would encourage you to include special districts as defined under ORS 198.010 into the relevant sections of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Landauer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Landauer

Lobbyist

Special Districts Association of Oregon