

Submitter: Angelita Sanchez
On Behalf Of: Small Municipalities
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or SB1585
Topic:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1585.

My name is Angelita Sanchez. I currently serve as a city councilor in a small incorporated city, Sweet Home. I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity, informed by direct experience with municipal budgeting, land-use decisions, and long-term infrastructure planning.

SB 1585 addresses a real and persistent challenge faced by small cities when seeking state grants for capital construction and municipal infrastructure. Under current practice, small cities are often expected to meet matching fund requirements comparable to those imposed on much larger jurisdictions, despite having far fewer financial resources and a more limited tax base. As a result, cities are frequently forced to choose between preserving core services or pursuing needed infrastructure improvements.

Small municipalities are something Oregon should be proud of. They are often the most fiscally disciplined and community-driven level of government in the state. With limited staff and tight budgets, small cities consistently do more with less while remaining closely accountable to the people they serve. SB 1585 recognizes this reality by aligning grant expectations with fiscal capacity rather than penalizing communities for their size.

From a city council perspective, excessive matching requirements do not simply strain budgets in the short term they can also function as a barrier to grant access. When entry requirements are set too high, otherwise qualified projects never move forward. In some cases, cities may feel pressured to enter into financing structures or land-use agreements that create decades-long obligations. This can result in land being effectively locked up for 40 years or more in order to satisfy funding conditions, limiting future councils' ability to respond to evolving housing, economic, and community needs.

SB 1585 moves in a more responsible direction by reducing these barriers to access. By establishing population-based caps on matching requirements, the bill allows more small cities to compete for grants based on project merit rather than fiscal leverage. It reduces pressure to over-encumber land or commit to restrictive long-

term arrangements simply to qualify for state assistance, while preserving flexibility for future governing bodies.

From both a governance and policy standpoint, SB 1585 reflects sound public policy. It respects local control, promotes fiscal responsibility, and strengthens infrastructure investment across rural and small-city Oregon without encouraging decisions that bind communities for generations.

For these reasons, this is something we can all get behind, as there are small municipalities in every district. I strongly support SB 1585 and respectfully urge your “aye” vote.