



PROTECTING THE WORLD'S WATER

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**Testimony presented by  
Nicholas D. Noble**

**Before the House Committee on Water  
February 9, 2021**

**In Support of HB 3090, Support for Oregon's  
Affordable Loan Program to Replace Failed Septic Systems**

My name is Nicholas Noble, and I am the Director of Government Affairs for Orenco Systems. Founded in 1981, Orenco has become an industry leader, with about 380 employees and some 330 points of distribution worldwide. With a deep respect for the environment and a long tradition of innovative problem-solving, Orenco Systems designs and builds decentralized wastewater systems in Southern Oregon.

Of the more than 450,000 Oregonians that depend upon septic systems to manage their wastewater, the majority of these systems serve Oregon's rural communities. Modern septic systems are an economical and sustainable solution for smaller communities where the costs of building and operating municipal wastewater management systems are prohibitively expensive. This is especially true for the many lower-income communities across the state, whose family incomes simply cannot absorb the additional costs associated with building and maintaining systems better suited for larger population centers elsewhere in the State.

Oregon's affordable loan program to replace failed septic systems is designed to help families and small businesses across Oregon access the roughly twenty to forty thousand dollars required to replace a system when it fails. Approval of the loan usually takes about forty-eight hours, and payment for the new system goes straight to the installer. It's a fast and relatively simple process, designed to give the customer and contractor maximum control to choose the system that is right for them. This program also helps to support small businesses who install and maintain these systems.

This program represents the initial step in providing rural Oregonians with financial assistance that they have been paying for since the inception of the CWSRF. Furthermore, if this program is allowed to be fully realized and funded it would facilitate assisting entire communities with sustainable and affordable wastewater solutions. Concomitantly, it would ensure environmental and public health thus giving rural communities an opportunity to address other challenges there are currently facing.

Rural Oregonians represent a significant tax base for Oregon and this should equate to an equitable distribution of State funds, both generated within the state or provided by

the Federal government. When looking at the issue before us it is imperative to realize the historic wastewater funding inequity rural Oregonian's have dealt with for decades. This is evidenced by the distribution of Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF); as of 2018 rural Oregon communities received .36% of the CWSRF.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the devastation of rural communities by wildfire, I urge the committee to increase the appropriations to well-above the requested two million dollars in order to begin providing relief to those who need it most.

As a designated representative of business located in rural Oregon, and as resident of a rural community myself, I testify in strong support of HB3090

Nicholas D. Noble

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