



Community Action Team

Serving Columbia, Clatsop, and Tillamook Counties

phone (503) 397-3511

fax (503) 397-3290

www.cat-team.org

02/09/2023

Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Hartman, Vice-Chair Owens, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of Community Action Team, Inc., I would respectfully ask you to support House Bill 3125, which will establish the Public Drinking Water and Sewer Ratepayer Assistance Fund, distributing much needed state financial assistance for water and sewer bill payments to help ensure low-income households have access to safe drinking water.

Community Action Team provides anti-poverty programs in three northwest Oregon counties - Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook. CAT, located in Columbia County, works with two sub grantees on the coast to deliver services there. Community Action Resource Enterprises, Inc. (CARE) serves Tillamook County and in Clatsop County, it is Clatsop Community Action (CCA). CAT's mission is to connect people with the resources needed to become self-sufficient. We envision vibrant communities, with hope and opportunity, where basic needs are met. CAT aids over 10,000 individuals annually in the tri-county region, 3,500 of these individuals are assisted with various types of utility assistance.

In 2021, through federal funding, our organization received \$360,658 to provide financial assistance for low-income families for their drinking water and wastewater bills. In a short amount of time, we have set up 24 contracts with community water systems and wastewater systems in our community. As of today, we have already spent \$116,392, assisting 261 families locally. We will have the remaining portion of the funding spent prior to this September.

House Bill 3125 will build on the hard work undertaken to establish a program to distribute water and sewer bill payment assistance by investing state resources. It would use lessons learned from the federal program and expand access to Oregonians currently ineligible for assistance, including low-income Oregonians living in multi-family dwellings whose utilities are bundled with rent.

In closing, we would ask you to support House Bill 3125 and build on the success of the existing program, which has been providing an essential service to many low-income Oregonians. In our communities, we are committed to helping prevent individuals from losing access to safe drinking water and wastewater.

Thank you,

Daniel Brown
Executive Director

Family Resource Center
125 North 17th Street
Saint Helens, OR 97051

Fiscal Office
124 North 18th Street
Saint Helens, OR 97051

Child & Family Programs
108 West B Street
Rainier, OR 97048