

April 4, 2025

RE: Support for Amendment 1 to House Bill 3939 – Redwood Highway Waterline Project

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

As an elected member of the Grants Pass City Council, I write to express my strong support for **Amendment 1 to House Bill 3939**, which includes critical funding for the **Redwood Highway Waterline** project in our community.

This project is not just a line on a map or another public works undertaking—it is an essential investment in the future of Grants Pass. The engineering is done, the permits are in place, and the city is fully prepared to move this project to construction. Every dollar allocated will go directly toward building this vital waterline, unlocking long-standing barriers to growth in a high-priority area of our city.

What's at stake? Over **1,600 new housing units**, or more than a third of the homes we project needing over the next two decades. The Redwood area has long been constrained by infrastructure limitations, despite being designated for medium and high-density development within our Urban Growth Boundary. This project finally addresses that constraint.

Beyond housing, this waterline is a cornerstone of public safety and resilience. It provides seismic redundancy, significantly improves fire protection capacity, and secures service to over **2,000 existing homes and businesses**—including schools, a college campus, and key commercial zones. It also safeguards over **186 acres** of land that can now move from underutilized to thriving, livable neighborhoods.

The collaboration with ODOT to install the line within the Redwood Highway shoulder is a smart, cost-effective solution that reduces the need for additional land acquisition and maximizes public investment.

As a City Councilor, I'm focused on ensuring our decisions today position Grants Pass for long-term strength, sustainability, and opportunity. The Redwood Highway Waterline project checks all of those boxes—and more.

I urge you to support Amendment 1 to HB 3939 and help us bring this transformational project to life. If you'd like more information, I would be glad to connect or direct you to our Public Works Director, Jason Canady (jcanady@grantspassoregon.gov | 541-450-6110).

Thank you for your consideration and continued leadership on housing and infrastructure challenges across Oregon.

Sincerely,

Seth Benham

City Councilor, City of Grants Pass