

HB 3125 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/9, 2/14, 3/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes the Public Drinking Water and Sewer Ratepayer Assistance Fund (fund). Directs Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (department) to provide grants from fund moneys to qualified organizations to distribute water and sewer bill payment assistance to low-income residential households. Directs the department to adopt rules for the administration and implementation of fund distribution. Appropriates \$15 million General Fund moneys to the assistance program.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Public drinking water and sewer rates are determined by private- and public-owned water utility companies. In 2020 and 2021, Congress appropriated \$14 million of federal funding to Oregon to assist low-income individuals with paying utilities via the Covid Relief Fund and the American Rescue Plan Act. The funds were dispensed through the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department and are not anticipated to be renewed.

House Bill 3125 would establish the Public Drinking Water and Sewer Ratepayer Assistance Fund, appropriate \$15 million General Fund moneys to the fund, and direct the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department to establish a grant program to fund qualified organizations to distribute water and sewer bill payment assistance to low-income residential households.