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February 12, 2019

The Honorable Michael Dembrow, Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
State of Oregon Senate
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Dembrow:

Regarding: Support for Septic Affordable Loan Program Funding (SB 756 / LC 3555)

The Oregon Onsite Wastewater Association (O2WA) urges passage of this legislation supporting and encouraging private funding of low interest loans for families to replace failing septic systems with modern onsite wastewater treatment systems. O2WA represents the community of over 700 small businesses firms consisting of Onsite Wastewater System Installers, Pumpers, Maintenance Providers, Designers, along with State, County and City Regulators throughout Oregon who collectively protect the public health and environment from the adverse impacts of human sewage.

Since its creation two years ago this program has grown into a state-wide program, serving families across Oregon by providing access to affordable, long-term lending that is operated, funded and overseen by the private sector with minimal government oversight or public financial risk. Given both the existing program's success, and the constant demand for the program's services, DEQ put \$2MM in its proposed budget. Unfortunately, these funds were removed in the final budget submitted to the legislature this year. This lack of funding greatly affects Housing Affordability and impacts families.

Our members serve clients who unfortunately do not always have the money to repair their septic systems in the manner required. According to DEQ:

"...there are 456,000 septic systems in Oregon and some 30 percent of Oregon households rely on septic systems. As many as 10 percent of these systems fail each year, according to various estimates, and not all homeowners or small businesses have the resources to make needed repairs. Fixing a septic system can cost as much as \$25,000."

Thank you for your longstanding commitment to protecting Oregon's environment and **for your consideration of the legislation needed to ensure effective and affordable public health protection.**

Sincerely,

*Trent Clinkscales, President,
Oregon Onsite Wastewater Association*