



2023 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and Clean Water Services – December 13, 2022

Introduction

Stretching from the eastern slopes of Oregon's Coast range to the western side of Oregon's largest metropolitan area, Washington County is home to over 600,000 Oregonians, nearly 400,000 jobs and thousands of businesses.

The first residents of Washington County were the Atfalati-Kalapuyans, or the Tualatin Band of Kalapuyans. Today, the county is Oregon's most diverse in population, as well as one of the state's fastest-growing counties. According to the 2020 Census, nearly 40% of county residents are Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian and/or People of Color, representing most of the county's net growth over the last two decades.

Washington County provides critical services to communities throughout the county, including but not limited to public health, public safety, transportation, emergency management, and affordable housing. County services are made possible through a workforce of approximately 2,300 employees. We work cooperatively with more than a dozen cities that are wholly or partially within the county's boundaries, five fire districts, plus Clean Water Services and other service districts to serve the county's shared residential, business and institutional constituents.

In coordination with the federal, state, and other local governments, Washington County works to meet the needs of the community. The continuous work of building a healthy, safe, vibrant and inclusive county where everyone can thrive is not just a benefit to Washington County. The Portland Metro Area, the state of Oregon and the nation benefit from the investments we make.

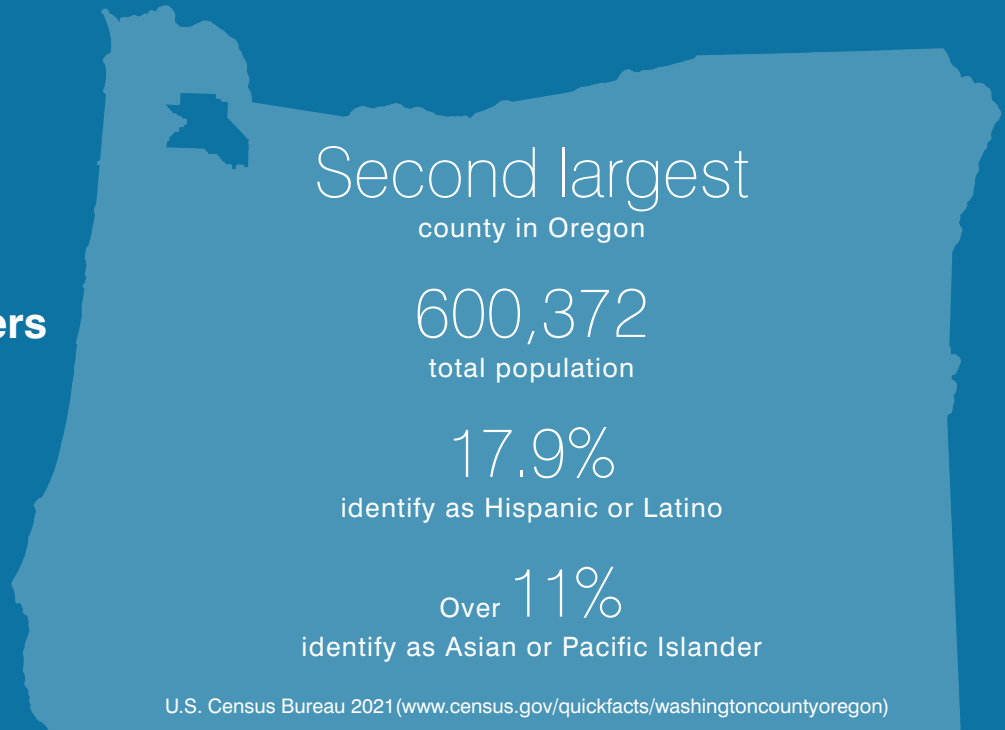
However, because of the long-term impacts of statewide restrictions on local government revenue sources and decreased investments by the state and federal governments, it is increasingly challenging to secure the resources needed to do the work. Therefore, our agenda focuses on how we can fulfill our mission and serve our shared constituencies through policy changes, investment and cooperation.

Working in partnership in federal and state government, Washington County is committed to overcome these challenges and create an increasingly safe, equitable and inclusive place to live, work and thrive.



Washington County is the second largest county in Oregon and is among the state's most diverse, including the state's largest county population of Latino/Latina/Latinx community members and the highest percentage of Asians and Pacific Islanders.

By the Numbers



The county is home to a thriving high-technology industry, sometimes referred to as the Silicon Forest, as well as world leaders in sports and recreational apparel and a long-established agricultural sector.

Washington County Economy



15,945 EMPLOYERS with more than 290,000 Employees



727 MANUFACTURING EMPLOYERS with 27.7% of the MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE IN THE STATE working in Washington County



270 TOURISM ESTABLISHMENTS with 16% of the TOURISM JOBS IN THE STATE located in Washington County



45 AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENTS with 3.4% of AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEES located in Washington County

WASHINGTON COUNTY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Secure ongoing public health funding and constituent relief for COVID-19 response and recovery.
- Promote participating in international agreements that improve market access and increase demand for Oregon-made products and advance efforts that benefit other identified county priorities including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing energy efficiency.
- Oppose policies that restrict or inhibit the County from making local investments necessary to support its missions and programs.
- Support the reinstatement of advance bond refunding. Oppose any efforts that would eliminate or place a cap on tax-exempt municipal bonds.
- Support legislation and policies that enable local officials to access resources to provide quality police, fire, emergency management and emergency medical services.
- Support fair and just outcomes for all to achieve their full potential.
- Oppose efforts to preempt, restrict, reduce or eliminate existing federal or local revenue resources.
- Advance equitable, age-appropriate, evidence informed, affordable physical, behavioral, community, and population health care and early-intervention program and service delivery.
- Support policies that increase pathways to equitable, accessible, and inclusive homeownership; preserve and add affordable, rental housing options; invest in programs to prevent houselessness; and offer safety nets to persons experiencing houselessness.



- Improve current federal financing tools to support, build and preserve affordable housing to increase the County's ability to further leverage funding and support a dedicated, long-term funding source for affordable housing.
- Support multi-modal transportation investments and long-term financial commitments to transportation infrastructure.
- Increase federal share of the funding for major transportation projects and strengthen local-federal partnerships.
- Seek investment in all forms of infrastructure needed to support equitable and inclusive economic viability and livability for all in Washington County.
- Support funding for public safety, emergency management, and public health needed to ensure the County's preparation for, prompt response to, and recovery from emergencies and disasters.
- Support policies that enhance economic growth while advancing a healthy and sustainable environment.
- Support investments that ensure, build and preserve the public health workforce, infrastructure, and modernization and develop a long-term funding source dedicated directly to local governmental public health.
- Sustain financial support for the county's public safety agencies to keep Washington County a safe place to live, work and thrive.
- Increase investment in workforce development programs to support increased pathways to living and family wage careers.



Clean Water Services is a water resources management utility that combines science and nature to clean water and return it to the Tualatin River. Our work safeguards the river's health and vitality, ensures economic success for our regions, and protects public health for over 600,000 residents and the businesses across Washington County.

Guiding Principles

- Support ongoing and expanded federal investment in grant and low-interest loan programs that will help finance water-related infrastructure projects.
- Support initiatives, including funding, that promote the long-term resilience and safety of water infrastructure.
- Support continued and expanded investment in water recycling initiatives, including funding for recycled water projects.
- Support continued investment for local conservation technical assistance.
- Support strategies to better understand and respond to impacts from climate change and emerging pollutants, including strategies to help mitigate increased treatment and infrastructure costs for publicly owned treatment works.



Priorities

- **Advancing Seismic Modifications for Scoggins Dam (U.S. Dept. of Interior - Bureau of Reclamation)**

The water stored behind Scoggins Dam (Hagg Lake) serves as the region's primary water supply source. The availability and reliability of this stored water resource is critical in order to meet the region's existing and future agricultural, industrial, municipal and environmental water supply needs. Recognizing the seismic vulnerability of Scoggins Dam, Clean Water Services will work to ensure the continued safety, reliability and security of this critical water supply source.

Specifically, CWS will:

- Engage in continued advocacy to ensure necessary seismic modifications to Scoggins Dam remains a priority for the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Support and pursue enhanced federal investment in the Bureau of Reclamation Safety of Dams program in order to expedite efforts to address seismic resilience needs and secure the region's primary water supply.
- Support an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation that allows advanced funds to be applied to the repayment contractors' share of future project costs or outstanding obligations.
- Ensure the equitable distribution of project costs among the federal government and local repayment partners.

- **Advancing Water Reuse/Recycled Water Opportunities (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/U.S. Bureau of Reclamation)**

Recognizing existing and future water resource needs within the basin, and impacts associated with future droughts, climate change and anticipated population growth, CWS will work to pursue and support funding for one-water approaches, including water reuse opportunities.

Specifically, CWS will:

- Support legislation which authorizes and appropriates federal funding for water recycling and reuse initiatives. CWS will support continued and expanded investment in the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART programs, including the Title XVI competitive grant program, as well as the Alternative Water Source Program (authorized under Section 220 of the Clean Water Act).
 - Advocate for federal regulatory consistency that supports and helps to further promote water reuse/recycled water projects.
- **Supporting Further Investments in our Nation's Water Infrastructure (Various Federal Agencies)**
The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (2021) represented an unprecedented level of federal funding for the nation's infrastructure, including the largest-ever investment in water infrastructure. While this investment represents a critical step taken toward addressing the nation's aging water infrastructure, the unmet water infrastructure needs across the country, throughout our state, and within our region continue to exceed the funding available. Recognizing the continued unmet needs for water infrastructure, and the potential cost implications for local communities/ratepayers, CWS will continue to support ongoing and expanded investment in federal, water-related funding opportunities and programs, including direct grants and principal forgiveness/low-interest loans.

Clean Water Services Priorities, cont.

- **Water Ratepayer Assistance (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/possibly other federal agencies)**

In 2021, Congress successfully established the Low- Income Household Water Assistance Program (administered by the Department of Health and Human Services). Of the nationwide total initial investment of over \$1.1 billion, Oregon received \$13.8 million which was ultimately allocated among the state's network of Community Action Agencies. Community Action (Washington County) received just over \$900,000 in assistance to help lower-income residents of Washington County with their drinking water and sewer bills. Within four months, the available assistance was fully expended, demonstrating a significant need beyond funds available. To address the current funding deficiency and unmet need for assistance, CWS will support additional federal investments in federal ratepayer assistance programs to support low-income households' payment of municipal water and sewer service bills.

- **Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)**

The Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge, located along the Tualatin River near Gaston, is one of the nation's newest wildlife refuges and is a site of critical importance for the health of water, wildlife and people within our region and across the Portland metro area. For nearly a decade, Clean Water Services, the Tualatin Valley Irrigation District and the Joint Water Commission have worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a strategic partnership to transform this expansive and critical site into a haven for wildlife and an asset for the region. To ensure the continued health and success of this important asset, CWS will:

- Support ongoing funding for the US Fish and Wildlife Services' National Wildlife Refuge System to ensure that adequate funding is available to prudently manage, operate and maintain the Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

- **Support Strategies to Implement Integrated Planning Approaches (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)**

In 2019, Congress passed the Water Infrastructure and Improvement Act (HR 7279) which amended the Clean Water Act to include the Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework. The framework lays out a comprehensive yet flexible planning process that provides municipalities with opportunities to engage in long-term planning that supports the wise use of resources while ensuring continued compliance and meaningful environmental outcomes. In 2020, Clean Water Services completed an integrated plan which was then submitted to the U.S. EPA. It will be important for the U.S. EPA to continue to provide resources to support the implementation of this work and to provide states with technical assistance and resources to incorporate integrated planning strategies into water quality permits.

Specifically, CWS will work to:

- Support the U.S. EPA's efforts to implement the Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework to ensure reasonable, cost-effective, and scientifically based permits and policies that will provide meaningful improvements to the nation's environmental and economic health.
- **Support Funding for Agricultural Conservation Incentives and Programs (U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service)**
CWS will support funding for agricultural conservation incentives and programs, including full funding for technical assistance to effectively deliver conservation program resources in collaboration with the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District, Clean Water Services and other partners.

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