



# 2025 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



CleanWater  Services

Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and Clean Water Services - November 19, 2024

## Land Acknowledgement

We recognize and honor the continuous contributions of all indigenous inhabitants to the county, and to the Kalapuya people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial.

## Introduction

Spanning from the vibrant urban neighborhoods on the western side of Oregon's largest metropolitan area to the picturesque eastern slopes of the Coast Range, Washington County is home to over 600,000 residents, nearly 400,000 jobs, and thousands of businesses.

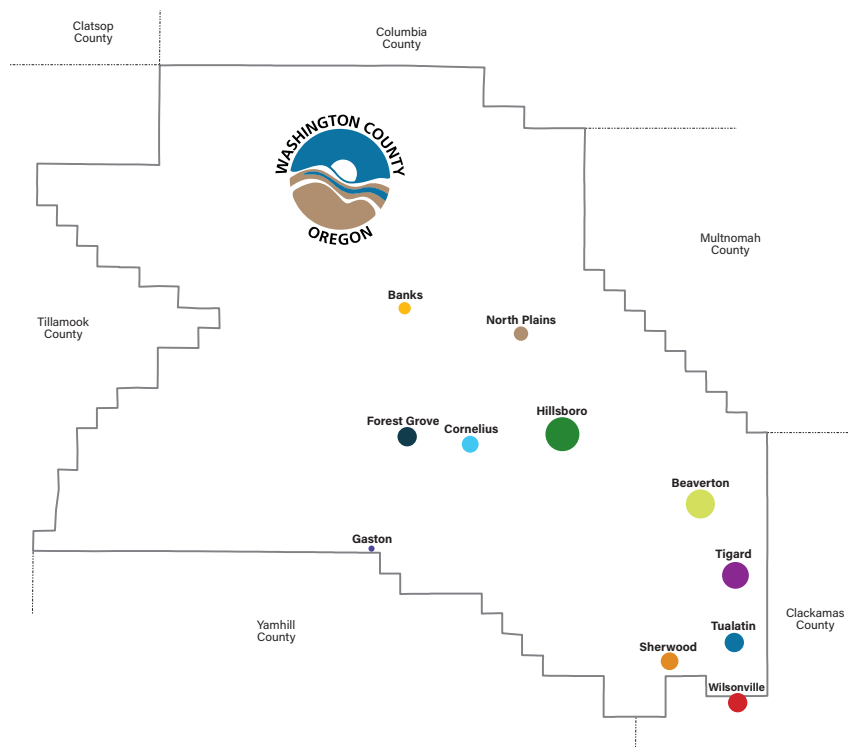
Washington County is proud to be one of Oregon's most diverse counties. Nearly 40% of our population identifies as Black, Latino, Asian, Indigenous, or other People of Color. Over 360,000 people reside in the county's 15 cities, and beyond our urban centers, over 200,000 people live in urban unincorporated communities like Aloha, Bethany, Bull Mountain, and Garden Home.

Our economic landscape includes a booming technology sector and numerous small businesses that are essential to our communities. 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 to support our communities.

Washington County provides critical services to communities throughout the county, including but not limited to behavioral and public health, public safety, transportation, emergency management, and affordable housing. County services are made possible through a workforce of approximately 2,300 passionate and dedicated 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.

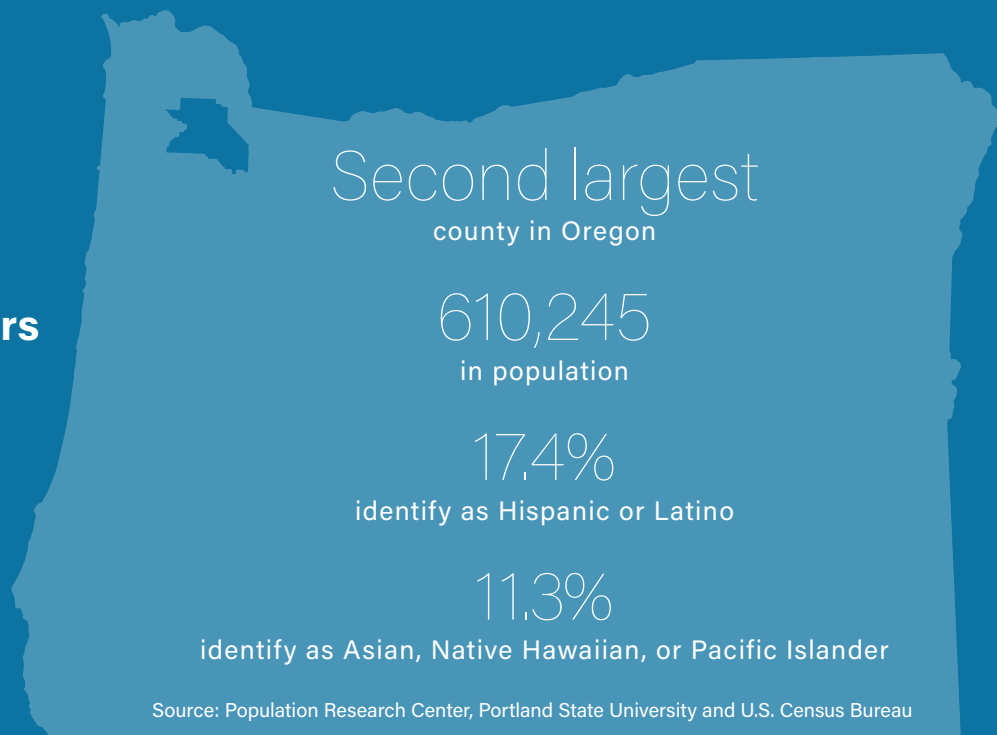
In coordination with the federal, state, and other local governments, Washington County works to meet the needs of our community. The continuous work of building and investing in a healthy, safe, vibrant and inclusive county where everyone can thrive is not just a benefit to Washington County, it also benefits the Portland Metro Area, the state of Oregon and the nation... From what Washington County makes, the world creates.

Therefore, our agenda focuses on how we can fulfill our mission and serve our shared constituencies through policy changes, investment and collaboration. Working in partnership in federal and state government, Washington County is committed to overcoming our present challenges to 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



Source: Oregon Employment Department

# WASHINGTON COUNTY GUIDING PRINCIPLES



- Secure ongoing public health funding to support response to ongoing and future public health challenges and opportunities.
- 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.
- Recommend investments, policies and programs from the federal government to improve the development, recruitment and retention of behavioral health professionals.
- Increase the allocation of Private Activity Bonds (PABs) to allow states to increase their caps and reduce the bureaucratic, arbitrary 50% test to 25%, allowing more homes to be developed using PAB, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and locally directed investments.



CleanWater Services  
FEDERAL AGENDA 2025



## About Clean Water Services

The work we do at Clean Water Services is critical to safeguarding the Tualatin River's health and vitality, ensuring economic success for our region, and protecting public health for more than 600,000 residents and the businesses across Washington County.

Clean Water Services (CWS) is a local government (special district) authorized under ORS 451 and located in Washington County. Our infrastructure includes over 1,400 miles of pipes, 44 pump stations, and four water resource recovery facilities that clean wastewater to near drinking water standards. We provide sanitary sewer and stormwater services (including collection, conveyance, and treatment).

In 2004, CWS worked with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to create the nation's first watershed-based National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, allowing CWS to coordinate efforts across its facilities and collaborate with Washington County and 12 partner cities with the entire watershed in mind.

CWS deploys innovative strategies through a combination of science and nature to clean water and return it to the slow and sensitive Tualatin River. In addition, we release stored water to augment flows in the Tualatin River for water quality purposes. We also recover resources including nutrients, reuse water, and renewable energy.

Clean Water Services' Board of Directors has adopted the following legislative guiding principle and priorities which will help direct our organization as we review and potentially take positions on legislation introduced throughout the 2025 Oregon legislative session.

## Federal Guiding Principles

- Support ongoing and expanded federal investment for grants, low-interest loan programs and principal forgiveness to help finance water-related infrastructure.
- Support initiatives, including funding assistance and integrated planning approaches, to promote the long-term resilience, efficiency, effectiveness and safety of water utilities and infrastructure.
- Support continued investment in local conservation technical assistance programs and incentives.
- Support strategies to better understand and respond to arising challenges, including impacts from emerging pollutants and climate-related events, including achievable targets, source control strategies, and policies to help mitigate increased treatment and infrastructure costs for publicly owned treatment works.

## Federal Priorities

### Advancing Seismic Modifications for

**Scoggins Dam** (*U.S. Department of Interior - Bureau of Reclamation*)

The water stored behind Scoggins Dam currently serves as the region's primary water supply source. The availability and reliability of this stored water resource is critical to meet the region's existing and future water supply needs, including for agriculture, drinking water, economic development and water quality. 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 that seismic modifications to Scoggins Dam remains a federal priority and that construction timelines will result in project completion no later than 2035.
- Support enhanced federal investment in the Bureau of Reclamation Safety of Dams program in order to ensure timely completion of the seismic modifications to Scoggins Dam.
- Support an agreement with 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 Opportunities

(*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/Bureau of Reclamation*)

Recognizing existing and future water resource needs within the basin and impacts associated with future droughts, anticipated population growth and increasingly complex water quality regulations, CWS will work to pursue and support funding to further advance water reuse opportunities.

Specifically, CWS will:

- Support legislation that authorizes and appropriates federal funding for water 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 projects.

### Advocating for Federal Investment in Water

**Ratepayer Assistance** (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other relevant federal agencies*)

In 2021, Congress successfully established the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Of the nationwide 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 significant need beyond funds available.

To address the current funding deficiency and unmet need for assistance, CWS will:

- Advocate for additional federal investment in federal ratepayer assistance programs to support low-income households' payment of municipal water and sewer service bills.



### **Support Funding to Ensure Effective Management of Wapato Lake National Wildlife**

*(U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

The Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge, located along the Tualatin River near the city of 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 U.S. 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 Funding for Agricultural Conservation Incentives and Programs**

*(U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service & Farm Service Agency)*

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and protect ground and surface water. CREP is administered by USDA's Farm Services Agency in partnership with the state of Oregon and local soil and water conservation districts. The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical assistance for planning and design of CREP practices.

Specifically, CWS will:

- Support full funding in the Farm Bill for the CREP program, including 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 local partners.

### **Advocate for policies and regulations that are protective of the environment and human health from exposure to emerging contaminants; work to ensure producer responsibility in a manner that protects utility ratepayers**

*(U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies)*

Emerging contaminants, including per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (also known as PFAS) pose significant risks to public health and the environment, including impacts for water utilities that may passively receive these contaminants.

Specifically, CWS will:

- Advocate for resources and strategies to address emerging contaminants, including source reduction, pollution prevention and expansion of pre-treatment programs.
- Support investments to advance research to help inform the development of policies and regulations that are based in science and data.
- Work to ensure that policies to address emerging contaminants are protective of ratepayers and promote a producer responsibility approach to funding source reduction and remediation.

### **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 (including throughout our state and within our region) continue to exceed the funding available. Recognizing the ongoing unmet needs for water infrastructure, and the potential cost implications for local communities and ratepayers, CWS will continue to support existing and expanded investment in federal, water-related funding opportunities and programs, including direct grants, principal forgiveness and low-interest loans.

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