



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: City Council
Meeting Date: August 17, 2026
From: Jeff Aprati, Deputy City Manager
Subject: League of Oregon Cities 2027 Legislative Priorities

DECISION TO BE MADE:

Provide the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) with the Council's top five legislative priorities for the 2027 session of the Oregon Legislature

APPLICABLE COUNCIL GOAL:

n/a

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT:

In preparation for the 2027 session of the Oregon Legislature, LOC is again polling its member cities to identify the most important policy issues to focus its legislative advocacy agenda.

Several LOC policy committees produced a total of 27 proposed priorities. Each city council is being asked to identify its **top five** legislative priorities.

A full list and explanation of the proposed priorities is attached to this report.

While in the past the Council has provided scores for each proposed priority on a scale of 1 to 5, this time the Council requested a simpler process. Each Council Member was asked to identify their own top five priorities and submit that information via Google Forms. Three Council Members completed the process; the results are discussed below.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS / ANALYSIS:

The following proposed priorities received the most support from the Council:

- WATER REUSE
The LOC will advocate for policies and investments that support the development and expansion of water reuse projects throughout Oregon. This includes: funding for planning, design, and construction; clear and predictable regulatory pathways; and technical assistance for local governments. The LOC will support maintaining local flexibility to implement community-specific reuse solutions that protect public health and environmental quality.

- INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

The LOC will advocate for increased and sustained investments in drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and water reuse infrastructure needed to support housing production, economic development, public health, and environmental protection. This includes: expanding flexible, low-cost financing tools that reduce ratepayer burden; supporting infrastructure capacity needed for housing and economic development; investing in aquifer storage and recovery projects; protecting system development charge authority; and sustaining infrastructure financing programs, including the Special Public Works Fund, which help communities address critical infrastructure needs. The LOC will advocate for policies that recognize the increasing costs associated with regulatory compliance, environmental protection, and workforce needs.

- RATEPAYER ASSISTANCE

The LOC will advocate for improved affordability for drinking water and wastewater customers while maintaining the financial stability necessary to operate, maintain, and improve local utility systems. This includes state-supported water and wastewater ratepayer assistance programs, and policies that consider affordability impacts on residents.

- PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW CLARITY

The LOC will advocate for a comprehensive statutory reset of the Oregon Public Meetings Law to restore operational functionality and practicality for local governments while protecting public transparency. This priority includes the following provisions:

- *Establishing an Intentionality Requirement: Limit serial meeting violations strictly to actions taken "knowingly and intentionally" to protect volunteer elected officials from penalties for good-faith, inadvertent errors.*
- *Streamlining Complaint Enforcement: Authorize the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) to immediately dismiss incomplete, trivial, or bad-faith complaints.*
- *Holding the Right Entity Accountable: Shift personal liability for purely administrative errors—such as delayed meeting notices—away from individual elected officials and onto the public body as an institution.*
- *Expanding the "Cure" Process: Provide flexible, accessible avenues for local governments to address and correct procedural complaints, including decision rescission or public acknowledgement with a corrective action plan.*
- *Right-Sizing Training Requirements: Reform mandatory compliance training to occur once per elected term rather than annually, while allowing incoming officials to complete the requirement prior to being sworn in.*

- WATER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The LOC will advocate for investments in workforce development programs that support the recruitment, training, certification, and retention of drinking water and wastewater professionals. This includes: support for operator-in-training and apprenticeship programs; certification and reciprocity improvements; regional training opportunities; and funding that helps communities develop and maintain a qualified water workforce.

RECOMMENDATION:

Confirm that the five issues listed above are indeed the top consensus priorities of the Council, or make adjustments if desired. The full text and explanation of LOC's proposed priorities is attached to the staff report for reference.

Once the Council has confirmed its selections, staff will fill out the electronic submission form on the Council's behalf.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS / EXHIBITS:

- Full text and explanation of LOC's proposed legislative priorities