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Oregon City commissioner: Vote yes for clean, reliable water

Adam Marl October 21 2021

Adam Marl: Most prudent course of action is to invest in upgrades now rather than playing catch up

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003717666845-0600.jpg>) Amid the devastating ice storm earlier this year, Oregon City lost access to our water supply for three days, which left us reliant upon city reservoirs.

At Mt. View Reservoir, the water was down to just a few feet before power was restored. Unfortunately, capacity is not the only issue with our aging water infrastructure. Paint is peeling from the ceiling of the Henrici Reservoir and thus poses a risk to our clean water, and as the first city in the west, we have water pipes that were around when Amelia Earhart took her first flying lesson 100 years ago. It's time for an upgrade.



COURTESY PHOTO: CITY OF OC - Paint is peeling from the ceiling of the Henrici Reservoir in Oregon City.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003717666869-0600.jpg>)



COURTESY PHOTO: CITY OF OC - Oregon City replaced a corroded and undersized pipe this year on Latourette Street.

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By now, you should have received a ballot in the mail containing two measures aimed at addressing the aforementioned issues. One allows the city commission to temporarily increase water rates above the annual 3% limit, while the other allows us to borrow money and apply for low-interest federal loans that will ultimately limit the rate increases.

To be clear, the measures do not set an increased water rate by virtue of their passage. Instead, they allow the city commission to look at our options and ultimately make a decision that balances costs with investments. The passage of both measures is critical to the future of our community, and neither one can work unless the other passes. If these measures are fully implemented, the average family would spend only \$6.56 more per month than what they would have been paying without the temporary increase at the end of the proposed six-year period.

I consider myself to be fiscally conservative and do not take rate increases lightly, but with the growing need for wildfire protection and a resilient drinking water system that can withstand future ice storms and their resulting power outages, I believe the most prudent course of action is to invest in upgrades now rather than playing catch up when our aged water system inevitably fails us and costs more to fix down the road. (<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003717667207-0600.jpg>)

The last year has made it abundantly clear that we can no longer take our water for granted. Let's leave the partisan bickering over infrastructure to those in D.C. and take care of things at home. Vote "yes" on Measures 3-576 and 3-578 for a clean and reliable water system here in Oregon City by Nov. 2.

For more information, please visit oregoncitywater.org (<https://oregoncitywater.org/>).

Adam Marl is an Oregon City commissioner.



Adam Marl

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