



Senator Bill Hansell

Oregon State Capitol
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April 17, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hansell Prevails for Milton-Freewater with SB 121A

Salem, OR – The Oregon State Senate passed a bill chief-sponsored by Senator Bill Hansell (R-Athena) Wednesday, April 15, that will give the city of Milton-Freewater options for land annexation. Oregon law permits annexation of a territory or district to allow people to gain access to sewer or waterlines if water quality is poor. This is intended to provide people living outside a city with safe drinking water and prevent communicable diseases. SB 121A seeks to ensure that residents may petition for solutions other than annexation in order to alleviate or remove conditions dangerous to the public health. SB 121A passed out of the Senate on a 30 to 0 vote.

Milton-Freewater currently is being forced to annex in a trailer park that is located about 1 mile northeast from the city growth boundary. Oregon law states the annexation of a territory must occur if eleven residents petition for annexation, and there are not currently any alternate means for providing safe drinking water to a community.

“This is a very important bill for the city of Milton-Freewater,” said Hansell. “Milton-Freewater will be the first of many Oregon cities to benefit from SB 121. Currently, cities have no choice but to accept forced annexation if as few as eleven residents request it. Now, cities can work with residents to find other solutions to the health hazard abatement that may be less costly and more effective. Without this bill, Milton-Freewater would have been unnecessarily forced to pay \$15 million to run all sewer and water pipes to the park.”

SB 121A allows for the city to stop forced annexation if 40% of the petitioners wish to remove their names upon finding a better solution for all parties.

“Senator Hansell is a true hero to Milton-Freewater and we are so thankful for this legislation,” Linda Hall, City Manager for Milton-Freewater, said.

“This bill was a culmination of many meetings with city, county and health officials, as well as the League of Oregon Cities, to craft a bill that would allow the city to find the best solution to an important problem,” said Hansell. “By working together we were able to give cities more freedom and flexibility in the annexation process.”

Senate Bill 121A now moves to the House of Representative for consideration.



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