

**Testimony by Wilsonville Mayor Tim Knapp  
in Support of SB 131:  
Establishing The Task Force on the Willamette Falls  
Navigation Canal and Locks**

For Public Hearing Scheduled on Feb. 18, 2015, Before the  
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation

**To Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Committee:**

The City of Wilsonville supports SB 131 to establish the Task Force on the Willamette Falls Navigation Canal and Locks in order to study issues relating to repair, reopening and operation of the canal and locks. The City is appreciative of the efforts of Senators Devlin and Olsen and Representatives Barton, Davis, Kennemer, Parrish and Read for their sponsorship of this proposed legislation.

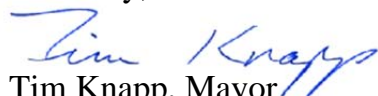
On November 3, 2014, the Wilsonville City Council unanimously approved Resolution No. 2496, "Resolution in Support of Reopening the Willamette Falls Locks," attached. The resolution specially called for creation of a State Task Force to work with the Corps of Engineers to develop a plan for sustainable operations of the Willamette Falls Locks.

The City of Wilsonville has vested interests in re-opening and operation of the Locks that impact the recreational, tourism and commercial economy of the community and the region.

Closure has placed a severe hardship on commercial, recreational and tribal river users, including Wilsonville-based recreationalists and businesses such as Wilsonville Concrete, Inc., and Marine Industrial Construction, LLC, which have used the Willamette Falls Locks for 127 years for transporting aggregate, logs and other goods and conducting dredging and towing operations and has 15–30 jobs that could be impacted if the Locks are not reopened on a permanent basis.

The City of Wilsonville respectfully urges a DO PASS vote on SB 131. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Tim Knapp, Mayor  
City of Wilsonville

**RESOLUTION NO. 2496**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF WILSONVILLE SUPPORTING THE  
REOPENING OF THE WILLAMETTE FALLS LOCKS**

WHEREAS, On January 1, 1873, the Willamette Falls Locks opened to allow passage around the waterfall at Oregon City thereby providing access to a one river system; and

WHEREAS, in 1915, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers purchased the Locks from the private operator thereby ensuring free public passage through the Locks; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, the Willamette Falls Locks were listed on the National Register of Historic Places; it was the first significant facility built to improve navigation on the Columbia-Snake River Inland Waterway system and through 1939, the most important; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, the Willamette Falls Locks was designated as a State Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Governor Kulongoski designated the Willamette Falls Locks as an Oregon Solutions project and formed the Willamette Falls Locks Oregon Solutions Task Force, which continues today as the One Willamette River Coalition coordinated by the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation, to preserve the Locks and support its continued operation; and

WHEREAS, on October 23, 2008, the Center for Economic Development Education and Research released a report under contract to the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation, entitled *The Willamette Falls Locks: A Case Study Analysis of Potential Transfer Issues*; and

WHEREAS, from 2006 through 2010, funding provided to the Corps from the Oregon Department of Transportation, Clackamas County and the U.S. Congress allowed for seasonal operations and selected structural upgrades, including \$2.2 million in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (PL 111-5); and

WHEREAS, in November, 2011, the Willamette Falls Locks were placed into “non-operational” status and on short notice were closed to vessel passage based upon an engineering assessment that identified safety concerns of potential failure; and

WHEREAS, closure has placed a severe hardship on commercial, recreational and tribal river users, including Wilsonville-based recreationalists and businesses such as Wilsonville

Concrete, Inc., and Marine Industrial Construction, LLC, which have used the Willamette Falls Locks for 127 years for transporting aggregate, logs and other goods and conducting dredging and towing operations and has 15–30 jobs that could be impacted if the Locks are not reopened on a permanent basis; and

WHEREAS, in March 2012, the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared the Willamette Falls Locks as one of the most threatened National Treasures, thereby providing added technical assistance; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the Historic Preservation League of Oregon (now Restore Oregon) named the Willamette Falls Locks as one of its 10 “Most Endangered Places”; and

WHEREAS, the Locks are a primary historic asset under applications being prepared for designation of the area at the Willamette Falls as State and National Heritage Areas; and

WHEREAS, on September 23, 2013, the Corps of Engineers gave notice of their intent to initiate a public consultation process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to determine whether the closure action has an adverse effect on the historic integrity of the Locks based upon the defining qualities and features that made the Locks eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, on May 15, 2014, the Corps of Engineers released their finding of historic adverse effect under Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act and announced their intent to proceed with development of an agreement to establish how to best “avoid, minimize or mitigate” the identified adverse effect to the historic character of the Locks; and

WHEREAS, on June 17, 2013, the Wilsonville City Council adopted the *Wilsonville Transportation System Plan 2013*, that states in part:

The City’s policy is to “[m]aintain access to the Willamette River so that the river may be used for transportation purposes in the future. Acquire or improve access to Willamette River for public docking purposes and consider the potential development of a new port or ports.” Chapter 2: The Vision, Policy 25, page 2-8.

“[The] Willamette River Port can be considered to support businesses that ship goods using barges on the Willamette River.” Chapter 3: The Standards, Freight Routes, page 3-8.

“The City of Wilsonville...supports efforts by [the] Corps of Engineers to maintain...the Locks at Oregon City.” Chapter 4: The Needs, Water Needs, page 4-16; and

WHEREAS, on January 6, 2014, the Wilsonville City Council approved \$2,500 in funding support to the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation for an economic analysis of reopening the Willamette Falls Locks; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2014, the Wilsonville City Council adopted the *Wilsonville Tourism Development Strategy* that called for the City to improve recreational access and use of the Willamette River to promote tourism; and

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2014, economics consulting firm ECONorthwest, under contract to the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation, published the *Willamette Locks Economic Potential Report* providing information on potential operating costs and community benefits of reopening the Locks.


NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF WILSONVILLE RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

1. The City of Wilsonville urges the Corps of Engineers to reopen the Willamette Falls Locks to general public commercial, recreational and cultural marine traffic.
2. The City of Wilsonville thanks the Corps of Engineers for working with local stakeholders to assess and mitigate the adverse effects of the closure and urges the Corps of Engineers to expedite the needed repairs and craft a plan for sustainable operations of the Locks.
3. The City of Wilsonville supports recognition of the Willamette Falls Locks in the Regional Transportation Plan and inclusion of the Willamette Falls Locks as a Metro JPACT federal priority.
4. The City of Wilsonville supports creation of a State Task Force to work with the Corps of Engineers to develop a plan for sustainable operations of the Willamette Falls Locks.
5. The City of Wilsonville urges the Oregon Congressional delegation to support the expedited repair and reopening of the Willamette Falls Locks.

ADOPTED by the Wilsonville City Council at a regular meeting on November 3, 2014,  
and filed with the Wilsonville City Recorder this date.

  
TIM KNAPP, MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
Sandra C. King, City Recorder, MMC

**SUMMARY OF VOTES:**

Mayor Knapp	Yes
Councilor Goddard	Yes
Councilor Starr	Yes
Councilor Fitzgerald	Yes
Councilor Stevens	Yes