

Distinguished Members,

Thank you for allowing a city such as Reedsport to testify today. I promise my words will be very brief, as more than once I have been admonished by State Senator Betsy Johnson for being a bit too verbose. And goodness knows, such an admonition from Senator Johnson is one not easily forgotten.

As you are becoming aware, levee infrastructure issues, in the wake of new federal rules, are beginning to impact municipalities and districts throughout Oregon. You are now hearing that story. The result of that impact will soon be felt, in a costly manner, by Oregon home and business owners. The flood insurance costs they may soon face will be prohibitive.

To avoid that, federal rules now require an expensive levee recertification process. Reedsport and other municipalities are now attempting to find, on extremely tight budgets, the means of financing needed engineering studies and then the identified levee improvements. Were the Infrastructure Finance Authority to have the mission and means to aid in that process it would be of tremendous value. Grants or loans could be leveraged in a manner that would allow communities to complete their projects in a timely and efficient fashion, one that might help mitigate the huge costs to those private citizens most impacted by the new federal policies.

I am completely aware that state legislators deal with limited budgets, just like communities such as Reedsport do. But such a program as HB 2436 is a most wise investment of state financial and human resources and one that will bring beneficial results throughout the state of Oregon. As a long time former mayor, a current port commissioner and the convener of the South Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee I am well versed on the importance of this levee issue. I absolutely encourage you to give HB 2436 your utmost consideration and to ultimately pass it, or one very similar.

Sincerely,

Keith Tymchuk