



May 13, 2015

Co-Chairs Devlin and Buckley
c/o Legislative Fiscal Office
Attn: Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court St. NE, Room H-178
Salem, OR 97301

[Via electronic mail]

Re: Business Oregon - \$7 Million - Levee Inspection & Repair - Special Public Works Fund

Dear Co-Chairs Devlin and Buckley:

The livelihoods of thousands of property owners and properties around Oregon are directly protected from flooding by levee systems. Thousands more are indirectly served by the assets within the levee protected areas. The levees in Multnomah County, for example, directly protect \$5.5 billion in assessed value including the drinking water systems for 20% of the state's population, the Portland International Airport and other critical transportation infrastructure that serves the state's most valued exporters like Nike and Intel.

The public safety and prosperity associated with the levees is, however, at risk. In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) enacted stricter standards for the regulation of levees. As a result, properties are at risk of losing access to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and worse, face some uncertainty about the level of public safety that exists behind the levees. For properties to remain eligible for participation in the NFIP and to ensure public safety, the levees must be investigated and repaired according to the new standards set by FEMA.

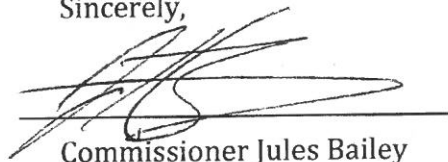
Communities and public agencies around Portland have begun coordinating efforts to address the challenges of levee accreditation. In north Portland, an Oregon Solutions team has been formed to handle this important issue that includes local government, regional government, community and business organizations. The collaboration has brought an impressive level of energy, interest, and finance to the issue of flood protection and levee improvement but it would benefit greatly from state support.

It is our understanding that Business Oregon has requested \$7 million in the 2015-2017 budget for the Infrastructure Financing Authority to address levee accreditation. The undersigned organizations strongly support this dedication of funds to levee projects and ask that you include it in your recommended 2015-17 budget.

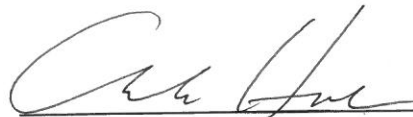
State funding dedicated to levee accreditation will further demonstrate to the US Army Corps of Engineers the state and local commitment to protecting public safety and ensuring economic prosperity. Other districts and cities around the country, such as Skagit County Diking and Drainage Districts in Washington and Sacramento, California, have shown that when all stakeholders work collaboratively and transparently it greatly increases the ability to attract federal funding.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Jules Bailey
Multnomah County



Mayor Charlie Hales
City of Portland

On behalf of the following Oregon Solutions Columbia Levee Improvement Project Team Members:

- City of Portland
- Columbia Corridor Association
- Bridgeton Neighborhood Association
- East Columbia Neighborhood Association
- Metro
- Multnomah County
- Multnomah County Drainage District No. 1
- Peninsula Drainage District No. 1
- Peninsula Drainage District No. 2
- Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality
- Oregon DLCD
- Oregon Governor's Office
- Port of Portland
- Sandy Drainage Improvement Company
- Sauvie Island Drainage Improvement Company