



February 12, 2016

The Honorable Fred Girod, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Tobias Read, Co-Chair  
Capital Construction Subcommittee  
Joint Ways & Means Committee  
900 Court St. NE, H-178  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Read, and Members of the Committee:

The Clackamas County Board of Commissioners is united in support for the Willamette Falls Locks funding proposal under consideration for funding this legislative session. As elected officials who also face difficult budget decisions every year, we appreciate the challenges you face in evaluating all of the worthy investments that contribute to the advancement of Oregon and understand the limited resources available. We thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

The repair and reopening of the Locks is critical for the economic development and future of this area in Clackamas County, the cities within our borders and the people we represent. Clackamas County is leading efforts to repair and reopen the Locks through facilitation of the Willamette Falls Locks Working Group (WFLWG), a consortium of stakeholders including the County, Metro, West Linn, and other public and private partners. The Willamette Falls Locks Working Group is credited for presenting this funding proposal.

Since the closure of the Locks in 2011, the Willamette River has essentially been divided into two separate rivers, thus eliminating the opportunity for new economic opportunities to emerge from their use. Now, with the Willamette Falls Legacy Project offering the potential for new economic growth and with the recent State Heritage Area designation, the Locks are a vital and critical resource for the redevelopment and future of this region.

The Willamette Falls Locks funding proposal would accomplish two tasks. First, it would provide short-term repairs that are needed to reopen the Locks on an interim schedule and would provide for two years of seasonal operational funds. Second, it would provide funding to support an economic benefits study demonstrating local and state economic significance, thus adding to the results of a future study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that will focus on the national significance of the Locks.

The Locks have been a part of Oregon's heritage for 143 years, and funding to build, operate, and maintain their use have come from many partners, including private business, local government, and the state. We appreciate your partnering with us to make sure the Locks remain a vital cultural, historic and economic resource for our community for future generations!

Once again, thank you for your consideration of the Willamette Falls Locks funding proposal.

Sincerely,



Tootie Smith, Commissioner  
Clackamas County Board of Commissioners  
WFLWG, Co-Chair