



# HARNEY COUNTY COURT

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February 28, 2017

RE: DLCD Grant Funding Critical to Harney County Planning Program

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this testimony on behalf of Harney County regarding the future of General Fund (DLCD) grant resources available to us and other frontier counties within the State. We have great concern that the current budget proposal will re-allocate or remove available funding to current and future planning projects within our community. Such action would stifle not only continuing progress within our local land use program, but potentially collapse our on-going natural resource planning efforts aimed at establishing important local development policies related to water, cultural/historic inventories and many other Goal 5 elements.

Biannual grant funding in the form of "Small-County" and "Technical Assistance" grants have provided Harney County with the ability to accomplish planning projects aimed at not only maintaining but advancing our land use program. Small County grants have provided much needed resources to help produce updates to our local code which produced (as an example) new local development standards for wireless telecommunication facilities. While these Small County grants are not considered a large amount (\$3,500/biennium), they made these updates possible for our small program.

Technical Assistance grants (TA Grants) have been instrumental to Harney County. In 2009, Harney County received the needed grant funding to completely update our Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance. The updates streamlined our 26-year old plan to more efficiently align it with the State-wide land use goals. In addition to a more understandable document, the work produced an update to our codes to comply with changes in state law at that time.

TA Grant funding also provides the opportunity for successful regional planning efforts. In 2013, Harney County was provided funding through this program which enabled us to work side-by-side with six other counties to establish a comprehensive report related to current and historic development within sage grouse habitats. The report aided the constructive development of Oregon's Sage Grouse Plan. While arguably not pushing this message enough... it highlighted how development was greatly limited in these areas due to land use standards successfully implemented by each county.

Presently the current budget proposal hits Harney County very hard in our current work on Goal 5 program updates. In mid-late 2016, Harney County (enabled by funding from a DLCD TA Grant) engaged in a robust public outreach/citizen involvement project to collect input as to what citizens would like to see improved under Goal 5. Local input provided direction to update our plan to recognize resources not currently inventoried and how policies need to be incorporated and/or addressed for consideration on both private and federal lands. After recent events in our community pushed us to move forward on these natural resource planning efforts, we worked with our regional DLCD rep to produce a scope of work for a multi-year/phase project. Phase one is complete and produced a work plan based on our outreach efforts that will guide our future updates. However, without funding normally provided by General Fund grants, this project will be stalled, or even crippled.

Please consider this testimony on behalf of Harney County in support of continued availability of grant funds from the General Fund for the continuing planning efforts of our community.

Respectfully submitted,



Pete Runnels,  
Harney County Judge



Mark Owens,  
Harney County Commissioner



Patty Dorroh,  
Harney County Commissioner