West Linn
CITY OF

March 14, 2017

Representative Ann Lininger, Chair
House Committee on Economic Development and Trade
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2470

Dear Representative Lininger and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the West Linn City Council to express our opposition to HB 2470, which creates serious limitations on urban renewal in Oregon.

As you know, West Linn is working with our citizens, tribal representatives, businesses, partner governments and many others to plan for revitalization of West Linn's waterfront area, including re-opening of the Willamette Falls Locks. Over time, our work is likely to require capital investments in critical infrastructure and new buildings. Urban renewal is one potential source on a very short list of funding tools for this work at the local level in Oregon. While West Linn is still far from moving ahead on any particular funding mechanism, we are very concerned about efforts to make this critical funding tool even more difficult to use.

Urban renewal works by providing up-front funding for activities that bring long-term financial gains to all taxing authorities while achieving broad community goals. Should West Linn pursue urban renewal in the future we would certainly conduct broad public engagement including significant outreach to our partner taxing authorities before moving ahead. However, HB 2470 would make it extremely difficult for us to create an urban renewal district by handing veto authority to all other taxing authorities. Even if a district is created, HB 2470 would make it difficult to administer by stacking urban renewal boards with likely opponents of the funding source itself.

HB 2470 would severely restrict the ability of West Linn, and all other cities across Oregon, to fund critical infrastructure and redevelopment activities. This is the wrong move in our current financial climate. **We urge a "no" vote on HB 2470.** Thank you for your time on this issue.

Sincerely,

Russell B. Axelrod
Mayor, City of West Linn