

March 20, 2017



Honorable Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Honorable Representative Brad Witt, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

This letter is to inform you of the Port of Cascade Locks strong support for the funding requests of the Gorge Commission. We wish you to know that the National Scenic Area is absolutely critical for the proper preservation of the natural environment of the Gorge Region and critical to the proper economic development and job creation in the region. After all, those are the two reasons the National Scenic Area was established back in 1986.

Since NSA inception in 1986, both states have been tied together with a contract to assist with the proper protection of the natural environment as well as economic development. Both the environment and economic development are the two major goals of the NSA. In fact, the people and communities of this beautiful region are counting on both states to deliver on the commitment made in 1986. We need a much more aggressive effort by both states in order for this region and its people to realize the full potential of the NSA.

Over the past few years we have strengthened our partnership with the Gorge Commission to enhance the local economy. As Public Ports (Oregon Municipal Corporations) we work hard to create jobs, recruit new businesses and strengthen existing businesses. We all understand the value of new jobs, new businesses and the creation of more tax payers to help provide the services we all want. Two years ago we formed an informal group called OneGorge to advocate for the proper economic development of the NSA. The Gorge Commission is a vital part of that effort along with 130 other jurisdictions and private businesses.

The Port of Cascade Locks strongly supports the additional funding for the Gorge Commission. In fact, we suggest that the Legislature come here and see the superior opportunity here. We also suggest that you strongly encourage both Governors to come here and meet with all of us to see how both states can be of

help. The two state compact sets the framework for all of us to work together to fully deliver on the promise of the NSA. We feel that this is the time to do that.

The Port feels that the creation of jobs for people, strengthening the community and enhancing the economy will lead to a healthier natural environment, more tax payers and increased financial resources for cities, counties, school districts and yes, even the State of Oregon. In order for us to achieve this noble goal, we need both States to fully fund the Gorge Commission in accordance with the two state compact. This is the time to begin making the NSA dream come true.

Thank you for your time and attention to that matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul".

Paul Koch
General Manager
Port of Cascade Locks

Cc: Gorge Commission
Sen. Thomsen
Rep. Johnson

PK:sm