

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2933
Tuesday, April 4, 2017
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

I am testifying today representing Association of Oregon Counties in support of HB 2933, sponsored by Representative Boone.

The Special Public Works Fund is an important source of funding for critical infrastructure throughout Oregon's cities and counties. The statute is very precise about limitations on loans and grants associated with project funding. Most of the allocations out of the fund are with relatively low interest loans, with a limit on grant funding per project of \$1 million.

When disasters hit Oregon communities, it has been helpful for the SPWF to have an ability to provide match funding with federal and other local assistance to help resurrect the community.

The proposal before us eliminates the statutory grant cap of \$2.5 million, and leaves the decision open to the Infrastructure Finance Authority. As you are aware, the Cities, Counties, Ports and Special Districts are consulted when the emergency element kicks in to be sure proposed allocations do not seriously jeopardize the fund for future use by all municipalities.

It is our understanding that Business Oregon will be able to by rule control use of the funding, and that anything needed over the current cap might be available only in the event of a catastrophic seismic event, not the "usual" federally declared disaster event. And, of course, with such a serious event, the Governor would be involved in decisions about funding, and other assistance. With this intent, we are in support of HB 2933.