



“Making Every Resource Count”

Oregon Wheat Growers League 115 SE 8th Street, Pendleton, OR 97801 (541) 276-7330 www.owgl.org

TO: Representative Caddy McKeown, Chair
Members of House Committee on Transportation Policy

FR: Blake Rowe
CEO, Oregon Wheat Growers League

RE: Yes on HB 2288

The Oregon Wheat Growers League is proud to represent the nearly 2000 farm across Oregon that produce wheat, one of our State’s largest and most valuable crops. Wheat contributes hundreds of millions of dollars in direct and indirect value to Oregon’s economy, especially Oregon’s rural economy.

The Connect Oregon program has provided important investments in Oregon’s transportation infrastructure for many years. The League is very supportive of HB 2288’s provisions that would provide lottery-backed bonds for a Connect Oregon VII program.

The Connect Oregon approach of matching state funding with local investment has a long track record of success in getting key multi-modal infrastructure projects completed. The vigorous competition and rigorous review process for these grants insures that the best projects, with the best returns to Oregon’s citizens and economy, get funded.

As an example, the Connect Oregon VI program provided critical matching funds for a project at the Port of Morrow that will be very beneficial to Oregon’s wheat industry and local farmers. The expansion of grain loading capacity and the addition of rail car loading and unloading capability will provide more efficient transportation, improve competitiveness, reduce carbon emissions, increase employment, and facilitate additional investments in local dairies and grain processing. This project will provide returns to Oregon’s investment for years to come.

We know there will be many important projects that could be facilitated by additional Connect Oregon funding. However, if there is any possibility that an investment of Connect Oregon dollars could help unlock the economic disaster caused by the loss of container service at the Port of Portland, we would rank that project first above all others. Container service is that important to Oregon’s farmers, manufacturers, and customers.

We hope you will join us in supporting HB 2288 to continue the great work that has been accomplished by the Connect Oregon program.