



Multnomah County Drainage District #1
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April 17, 2017

Legislative Fiscal Office
Attn: Joint Ways and Means Committee
Education Subcommittee
900 Court St. NE, Room H-170
Salem, OR 97301

Education Subcommittee of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Multnomah County Drainage District (MCDD) to express my support for Oregon Solutions. The Oregon Solutions program has been essential to the success of Levee Ready Columbia, a partnership of over 20 organization working collaboratively to maintain a reduced risk of flooding along the Columbia River in in the Cities of Portland, Gresham, Fairview, and Troutdale.

MCDD, in partnership with three other drainage districts, manages a flood risk reduction system that serves over 12,000 acres. The area MCDD serves is home to assets of local, regional, and national significance, including critical infrastructure like the Portland International Airport and a source of clean drinking water that serves over 800,000 Oregonians. The flood risk management system managed by MCDD allows for the Columbia Corridor, which holds over fifty-percent of the region's manufacturing and warehouse jobs. These jobs create \$16 billion in annual economic activity and have \$7.3 billion in property value. All of this generates a direct \$67 million in local tax revenue annually.

The flood risk management system that makes this all possible includes 27 miles of levees and 12 pump stations, the largest of which pumped over 25 billion gallons of water in 2016. This system was put at risk in 2013 when the US Army Corps of Engineers informed MCDD that sections of the system no longer complied with federal regulations through Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program. Due to changes at the federal level it was unclear which jurisdiction had responsibility and authority to ensure federal regulations were met. Recognizing the importance of meeting these federal requirements to ensure the economic resiliency of the area, the governor designated this project as an Oregon Solutions on October 2013. Four years later, Levee Ready Columbia has become a recognized levee infrastructure project within the region and across the state. Due in large part to the leadership of Oregon Solutions, the partners involved in Levee Ready Columbia have collaborated on two

Infrastructure Finance Authority Loans from Business Oregon for over \$5 million to fund levee evaluations, secured grants from FEMA, and generated substantial community support. Oregon Solutions continues to facilitate and lead Levee Ready Columbia under the leadership of Stephanie Hallock. The partnership recently held an executive committee meeting, which highlighted the positive support for this project with all jurisdictional parties committing to additional funds to build a biennial budget for FY17 through FY19.

The staff at Oregon Solutions are high quality leaders who invest in communities as well as their projects. Their professionalism and history in Oregon politics brings with it a high level of respect. As a neutral party, Oregon Solutions facilitators are able to bring decision-makers and community members to the table to discuss challenging issues and develop solutions in partnership. At Levee Ready Columbia we have had the opportunity to experience the Oregon Solutions process first-hand and can honestly say that their approach to collaborative governance is refreshing, inspiring, and effective.

This effort has utilized partnerships to continue increasing risk awareness and creating a more robust system to manage the flood risk reduction infrastructure in the future. Oregon Solutions has been the guiding force in this partnership and provides a crucial leadership role. Without the organization, the formation and development of Levee Ready Columbia would be uncertain and its future unclear. We recognize the significance of the Oregon Solutions program and have heavily benefited from its services. We hope that you are able to continue funding this program and allow it to continue its legacy into the future; allowing other communities to partner with the organization and meet challenges with collaborative and proactive solutions. The organization's mission, to bring collaborative governance to Oregon communities, is the keystone of successful public governance. For these reasons, I strongly encourage that the state continue supporting Oregon Solutions.

Sincerely,

Reed Wagner
Executive Director
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