

May 19, 2017

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
900 Court Street  
Salem, OR 97301

Co-chair Senator Girod, Co-chair Representative Holvey, and Committee Members,

I am Maryhelen Kincaid, a neighborhood resident from the East Columbia Neighborhood Association which is adjacent to the Marine Drive levee in NE Portland. It is my pleasure to be with you today in support of Senate Bill 5530, particularly the \$11 million for Regional Solutions projects as well as \$10 million for Special Public Works Funds for Levee Projects.

I have lived in the East Columbia neighborhood for 14 years and want to describe the impact that both Business Oregon and the levees have had not only on my life, but the lives of my neighbors and the region as a whole.

East Columbia is a unique neighborhood that includes wetlands, open space and drainage ways, combined with residential, industrial, and agricultural uses. All protected by the levee system. While the protected area in and near the neighborhood includes Portland's prime industrial land and Portland International Airport, the levees also protect Portland residents and their property. In 2010, about 1,750 people called the East Columbia neighborhood home. This diverse neighborhood includes more than 650 households—more than a quarter with children under 18.

The State's participation and continued support of the Levee Ready Columbia effort is essential for the continued collaboration and participation of the program partners including 4 cities, Multnomah County, Metro, the Port of Portland, and the Drainage Districts. The result of this effort will sustain the economic vitality, environmental variety, and neighborhood livability in the areas protected by the Columbia Corridor levee system.

Rather than waiting for a future flood to reveal vulnerabilities in our levee system, we are evaluating the strength of the levees and planning for the effects of climate change. The evaluation, certification, and accreditation of the levees by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as managed through the Levee Ready Columbia program, has profound impacts on our neighborhood. The flood protection afforded by the levees is essential for our residents to sleep soundly and raise our children confidently; assured that the levees will continue to protect our homes.

As residents and property owners we recognize the significance of Levee Ready Columbia and have heavily benefited from its services. We hope that the State will continue to be a partner in this program. Additionally, we support the addition of \$10 million to the Special Project Works Fund to be applied to Levee Projects so that other communities can also invest in their levee

infrastructure to enhance public safety. This funding will support not only the Portland metro area, but numerous rural and urban communities across the state including Scappoose, Warrenton, Reedsport, Springfield, Pendleton, Rainier, and Milton-Freewater. The Levee Assistance Program will enable communities throughout Oregon to apply towards critical improvement to aging levee infrastructure that reduces flood risk for working lands, residential, commercial, and industrial development, and other community assets.

This is an opportunity to provide funding for a program that will help avert disaster.

As you prepare your budget for the 2017-19 biennium, please keep in mind the value of hundreds of miles of levees across Oregon's landscape. Investing in this risk reduction infrastructure is an investment in our state's resilience: it strengthens our state's economy in the present and prevents disastrous flood damage in the future. We urge your strong support.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage that the state support all levee related funding, both through the \$11 million for Regional Solutions as well as the \$10 million for Levee Projects in the Special Public Works Funds.

Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maryhelen Kincaid". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Maryhelen Kincaid  
East Columbia Neighborhood Representative  
Levee Ready Columbia Project Team