



June 14, 2017

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
SB 256: Willamette Falls Locks Commission**

Clackamas County supports SB 256: The Board of County Commissioners supports SB 256, which creates a State Commission for the Willamette Falls Locks.

SB 256 represents the final recommendation by the Willamette Falls Locks State Task Force established under SB 131 in 2015. Convened by Governor Barbara Roberts and facilitated by Oregon Solutions, the State Task Force recommended the creation of a State Commission to serve as a policy-making and advisory body on issues related to the future of the Locks and their status with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Creation of a State Commission would also ensure the USACE understands the value and interest of the Willamette Falls Locks to our State and our citizens by providing a high level government-to-government relationship with USACE. Clackamas County was proud to participate in and host the State Task Force, and proud of its final recommendation represented in SB 256.

The Willamette Falls Locks are in Clackamas County on the banks of West Linn, the heart of the State-designated Willamette Falls Heritage Area. Completed in 1873, the Locks are an important part of Oregon's history. In 2011, the Willamette Falls Locks were placed in caretaker status because of structural safety concerns, preventing future usage of the facility. USACE is currently conducting a Final Disposition Study to determine how best to remove the facility from their inventory. The State Commission will be tasked with evaluating the repairs needed to reopen the Locks, advocating for those repairs together with the Corps, and identifying potential transferees for the Locks. If repaired and reopened, the Locks could once again serve as a historic resource for local tribes, an economic advantage for local businesses, and a recreational attraction for Oregon's many visitors – including visitors to the much anticipated Willamette Falls Legacy Project.

Creation of a State Commission for the Willamette Falls Locks will help secure a future that is right for communities along the Willamette River and right for Oregon.

We urge a “do pass” recommendation of SB 256.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.