



June 14, 2017

Testimony of Clackamas County Commissioner Martha Schrader

Re: SB 256, Willamette Falls Locks Commission -3 Amendment

To: Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

Co-Chairs Johnson and Gomberg and Members of the Subcommittee,

My name is Martha Schrader. I am a Clackamas County Commissioner and Co-Chair of the Willamette Falls Locks Working Group.

SB 256 represents the final recommendation by the Willamette Falls Locks State Task Force established under SB 131 in 2015. The -3 amendments to HB 256 improve upon this recommendation by incorporating additional stakeholders in the decisionmaking body and thereby broadening the represented interest in the facility. Additionally, the -3 amendments reduce the original financial request by \$400,000. This reduction is able to occur because of unused funds provided by the 2016 State Legislature to the Willamette Falls Locks project which were intended for temporary repairs that the U.S. Army Corps (Corps) declined to accept. Clackamas County, as part of the Willamette Falls Locks Working Group, supports the redirecting of those funds to support the creation of the State Commission for the Locks. By making this change, the proposed State Legislature's financial burden is eased and the proposed State Commission retains the benefit of a complete budget.

The value that a State Commission would bring to the advocacy of the Willamette Falls Locks cannot be stressed enough. The Corps very clearly works better with stakeholder groups when the State is involved, and a formalized body representing a coalition of stakeholders will cement for the Corps a point of contact that they can work with as they pursue a disposition alternative.

Finally, the Corps has recently released a draft disposition study which aims to justify the Corps' divestiture of the facility. Clackamas County is pleased to report that the draft study recommends a transfer of the Locks to a new owner. While the draft could certainly be improved to increase the likelihood of transfer, the Corps' decision to pursue transfer further justifies the intention behind SB 256 to work on issues related to new governance for the Locks, as well as to pursue options for maintenance and operation funds and, most importantly, support the search for a suitable transferee.

I urge your support for SB 256 and the -3 amendments.