

"Making a difference through excellence of service"



CITY OF WARRENTON

February 14, 2019

Senate Environment & Natural Resource Committee
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

Floodplain management is an ongoing challenge for the City of Warrenton and Clatsop County. Four diking districts protect the City of Warrenton, three of which are controlled by the city (Warrenton Diking Districts 1, 2, and 3) and have no tax authority, and one (Clatsop County Diking District 11) that is outside city control and has a very limited tax base mostly comprised of pasture, road, and wetlands. The condition, height, and accreditation status of the District 11 levee is a major reason that District 2 and 3 could not secure provisional accreditation through FEMA.

Our community faces expensive challenges. The archaic funding of these levee systems is inadequate to meet our modern needs. It is possible that a new cross-levee is needed and that much of our levee may need to be raised to a higher elevation to secure accreditation, including a section of Highway 101-Business. All are costly efforts that our community has limited ability to fund. The City of Warrenton's levee related work is funded through a storm water utility fee, which equates to about \$380,000 in revenue per year. We are trying to budget and save for completing the geotechnical assessment of the levees, which will cost more than \$1 million. It is possible that improvements will cost around \$16 million including the improvements to Clatsop County District 11, which isn't a part of the USACE Rehabilitation & Inspection program and is out of the city's control.

Warrenton is just one the many communities facing challenges associated with our aging levee systems. Around the state, communities are struggling to identify the funding needed to complete the investigation and construction needed to meet federal standards. We cannot afford to take out a loan for the work; it is not feasible with our constrained budgets. Larger grants to help with this work would make a big difference.

On behalf of Warrenton, please support Senate Bill 254 to allow the IFA to issue more and bigger grants from the levee subaccount of the Special Public Works Fund. We ask that you also support Senate Bill 432 to ensure there is funding in the subaccount for the next biennium.

Sincerely,

Henry Balensifer, III

Mayor