

Bridgeton Neighborhood Assn.

City of Fairview

City of Gresham

City of Portland

Bureau of Environmental Services

Bureau of Transportation

Portland Parks & Recreation

Portland Water Bureau

City of Troutdale

Columbia Corridor Association

Columbia Slough Watershed Council

East Columbia Neighborhood Assn.

Federal Emergency Management

Agency

Jubitz Corporation

Metro

Multnomah County

Multnomah County Drainage District

Peninsula Drainage District #1

Peninsula Drainage District #2

Port of Portland

State of Oregon

Dept. of Environmental Quality

Dept. of Land Conservation &

Development

Governor's Regional Solutions Team

US Army Corps of Engineers

February 18, 2019

Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources

Oregon State Legislature

900 Court Street NE

Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 254 and 432

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

Oregon has over a thousand miles of levees across the state. From Burns to Scappoose, Portland to Pendleton, Springfield to Klamath Falls, Tillamook to Vail and Turner to Cheshire, communities are struggling to maintain these old systems, let alone do the work required to comply with changing federal safety standards for levees.

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Superstorm Sandy in 2012, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) overhauled their levee safety standards, significantly increasing the requirements for local levee sponsors. For local mapholders (the Cities) and property owners in a historic floodplain to be eligible for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which provides property owners behind a levee with access to affordable flood insurance, local levees must maintain certification and accreditation through FEMA. As long as the levee system is accredited, FEMA does not classify the historic floodplain behind the levee as a Special Flood Hazard Area, which means existing and new development is not required to build to floodplain standards. The new FEMA and USACE standards have made it more expensive and time-intensive to achieve and maintain accreditation and local access to NFIP. In the Portland area, it cost over \$5 million to do the technical evaluation needed to identify the deficiencies within our 27-mile levee system along the Columbia River. We estimate it will cost about \$50 million to do the bare minimum to meet FEMA standards, and it would cost at least \$115 million to fully modernize the system. In Warrenton, the city expects it to cost over \$4 million to do the technical investigation required by FEMA and the full price tag to be approximately \$16 million to make the necessary improvements to their local levees.

In 2015, the state legislature created a levee-related loan fund under the Special Public Works Fund (SPWF) of Business Oregon's Infrastructure Finance Authority (IFA) to help local jurisdictions address levee related challenges associated with FEMA accreditation. Although the loan fund has proved immensely helpful to the jurisdictions that are able to finance a loan,

many have not been able to take advantage of the funding because they cannot afford to pay back a loan over time, even at the IFA's modest interest rates. As a result, these jurisdictions have not been able to make use of the fund, which means their levee projects remain incomplete, putting residents and businesses in these communities at greater risk.

Communities across Oregon need access to more grant funding to be able to improve their levees to meet new federal standards. Senate Bill 254 will allow the IFA to administer more grants through the levee subaccount by outlining the ways in which the subaccount can be administered differently than the SPWF. It does not, however, change the SPWF requirement that at least 60% of the funds appropriated must be used to provide assistance to rural or distressed areas.

Directing the IFA to provide more grants from the levee subaccount to support communities that are otherwise unable to complete levee projects is a basic step to take to support the local jurisdictions struggling with aging flood safety infrastructure.

But just remember, if you build it, they will come with hopes of funding, which means there will need to be some funds available in the account for the next biennium. It's our understanding the majority of the funding appropriated for the 2017-2019 biennium has been used. Please support Senate Bill 432 to allocate \$10 million in lottery funds to the levee subaccount for the 2019-2021 biennium.

With additional grants available, and funding in the subaccount, more communities will be able to get to work planning and constructing important levee projects to maintain or achieve FEMA certification and accreditation, thus giving local property owners access to NFIP and protecting local property values.

Thank you for past and previous support of the levee subaccount of the Special Public Works Fund. It's a much-needed resource for our critical flood safety infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Levee Ready Columbia Partners

"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



CITY of REEDSPORT

451 Winchester Avenue
Reedsport, OR 97467-1597
Phone (541) 271-3603
Fax (541) 271-2809

February 15, 2019

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

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

The certification of our levee system has been an ongoing challenge for the City of Reedsport and is of utmost importance for the safety and economic stability of our community. This requirement has opened our eyes to the very real danger that this community, and many like it, face should certification not be achieved soon.

For over half a decade the City has actively pursued levee certification but is bound by the financial limitations inherent to most all rural south coast communities. The engineering analysis that the City has been able to complete thus far has revealed issues that far exceed the City's debt capacity and ones we will not be able to overcome without a greater level of grant assistance from cooperating partners like the State. We have been effective in engaging with federal partners on several grants and have taken advantage of what the state has offered in the way planning grants; however, to achieve certification our levee will require a great deal more.

The City's 2.5 mile levee system was constructed by the USACE in 1969 and relinquished to the City shortly after. Over the last 50 years the levee has suffered from extreme settlement leaving the City vulnerable to even a 100 year event. To counter this settlement, and achieve certification, the levee will need to be raised by 3 to 4 feet. This includes raising earthen levee sections, constructing floodwalls in areas where the levee butts up against intense development and replacing a sheet pile wall near Champion Park. Both state highway bridge sections (Hwy 101) on the north and south end of the levee have undermined levee due to the settlement of those structures and will need to be fortified with sheet pile and/or floodwalls. Lastly sheet pile will have to be driven in several spots to cut off potential seepage channels that could allow water to flow under the levee resulting in levee failure. A map has been included on the back of this letter for reference. The estimated cost for these projects is approximately \$5.8 million.

Given that Highway 101, Highway 38 and a State of Oregon owned ODOT maintenance facility are all protected by the Reedsport levee we hope you see the benefit this provides to more than just the residents but the entire State.

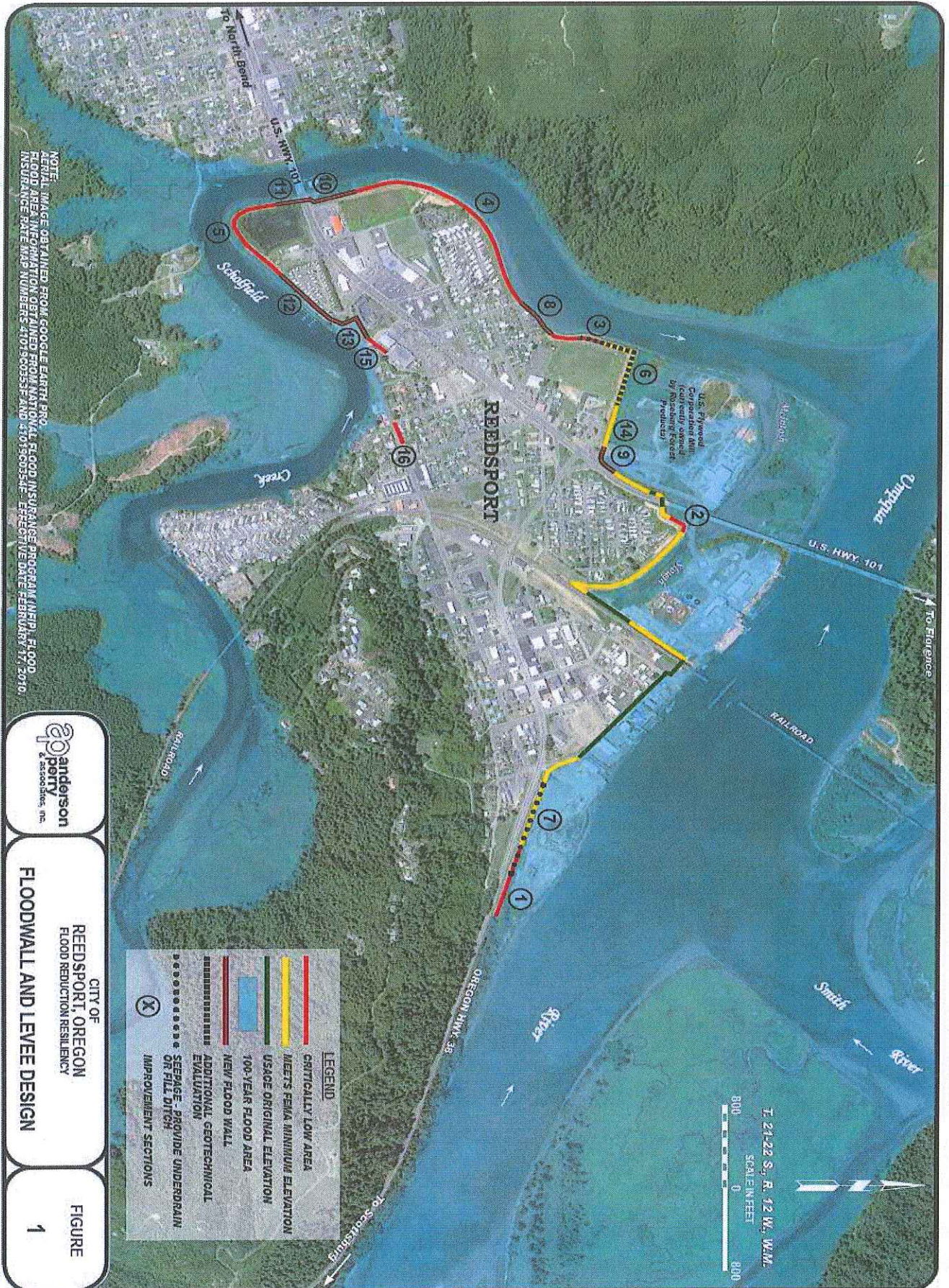
Reedsport is just one of many communities facing challenges associated with aging levee systems. Around the state, communities are struggling to identify the funding needed to complete the investigation and construction needed to meet federal standards. If we could afford to take out a loan for the work, we would, but that is not feasible with our constrained budget. Larger grants to help with this work would make a big difference.

On behalf of Reedsport, and other communities like ours, please support Senate Bill 254 to allow the IFA to issue more and larger grants from 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,



Jonathan Wright
City Manager



NOTE: AERIAL IMAGE OBTAINED FROM GOOGLE EARTH PRO. FLOOD AREA INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP). FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP NUMBERS 4101900353E AND 4101900354E. EFFECTIVE DATE FEBRUARY 17, 2010.



CITY OF
REDSPOET, OREGON
FLOOD REDUCTION RESILIENCY
FLOODWALL AND LEVEE DESIGN

FIGURE
1

LEGEND	
[Red line]	CRITICALLY LOW AREA
[Yellow line]	MEETS FEMA MINIMUM ELEVATION USAGE ORIGINAL ELEVATION
[Green line]	100-YEAR FLOOD AREA
[Blue line]	NEW FLOOD WALL
[Dashed line]	ADDITIONAL GEOTECHNICAL EVALUATION
[Dotted line]	SERVICES PROVIDE UNDERDRAIN ON FILL DITCH
[Crossed circle]	IMPROVEMENT SECTIONS



HARNEY COUNTY COURT

Office of Harney County Judge Pete Runnels
450 North Buena Vista #5, Burns, Oregon 97720
Phone: 541-573-6356 Fax: 541-573-8387

Websites: www.co.harney.or.us ♦ www.harneycounty.org

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 has been an ongoing challenge for communities in the Harney basin. In Burns, a decades-old levee helps reduce the risk of flooding along the Silvies River on the eastern edge of town. The levee helps, but it is old and in need of repairs. Without it, the town would flood each spring when the river swells with snowmelt from the Blue Mountains.

Many levee communities can talk about the risk of flooding and the potential consequences of levee failure. For those of us in Harney County, flooding is a very recent memory. In 2011, our levee breached during high-water on the river. Volunteers and the National Guard hurried to place tens of thousands of sandbags to reinforce the levee, but damage was still sustained to the highway and dozens of homes. In 2017, the river flooded again. The community ran pumps and filled and placed sandbags as we watched the river climb toward the top of the levee. In both cases, some residents had no way in or out of their property and homes were damaged.

These recent floods have led to collaborative efforts to understand and try to improve the situation. We are working with FEMA to adopt a new flood insurance study and map. Right now, FEMA does not recognize our levee system and therefore continues to map the area as 100-year floodplain. Although we're interested in pursuing accreditation, which would lift restrictions on development in the floodplain and allow local landowners to get access to more affordable flood insurance, it's extremely expensive to complete the necessary assessment, let alone to complete the repairs identified.

Harney County is just one the many communities facing challenges associated with our aging levee systems. Without certification and accreditation, we cannot get FEMA to recognize our local levees. Around the state, communities are struggling to identify the funding needed to complete the investigation and construction needed to meet federal standards. If we could afford to take out a loan for the work, we would, but that is not feasible with our constrained budgets. Larger grants to help with this work would make a big difference.

On behalf of Harney County and Burns, and other small communities like ours, please support Senate Bill 2324 to allow the IFA to issue more and bigger grants from levee subaccount of the Special Public Works Fund. We ask that you also support Senate Bill 2324 to ensure there is funding in the subaccount for the next biennium.

Sincerely,

Pete Runnels, Harney County Judge

Dauna Wensek, City of Burns



City of Burns

242 S. Broadway

The Heart of the Big Country

BURNS, OREGON 97720

(541) 573-5255 • (541) 573-5622 Fax

February 13, 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 has been an ongoing challenge for communities in the Harney basin. In Burns, a decades-old levee helps reduce the risk of flooding along the Silvies River on the eastern edge of town. The levee helps, but it is old and in need of repairs. Without it, the town would flood each spring when the river swells with snowmelt from the Blue Mountains.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dauna Wensenk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "W".

Dauna Wensenk
City Manager