



March 21, 2019

The Honorable Lew Frederick, Co-Chair  
Oregon State Senate  
900 Court St. NE, S-419  
Salem, Oregon 97301

The Honorable Susan McLain, Co-Chair  
Oregon House of Representatives  
900 Court St. NE, H-477  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Senator Frederick and Representative McLain:

We are writing to request the Oregon Joint Committee on Ways and Means support full funding for **Oregon Solutions**, having received tremendous support from this program on the Levee Ready Columbia project in Multnomah County.

This project has major life safety, resiliency, economic and environmental ramifications for the entire Portland metro area. The Columbia Corridor levees from Sauvie Island to Troutdale protect an area that contains more than 59,000 jobs and more than \$16 billion in annual economic activity. Nearly 9,000 residents call the leveed land home. In 2011, a letter from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers informed the small drainage districts responsible for maintenance of the levees that they were no longer certified as being protective of a 100-year level flood, exposing the properties not only to the physical danger of a potential breach, but also to the loss of federal flood insurance for the entire Columbia Corridor industrial area. Addressing both the physical and legal liabilities of the system was urgently needed, but without an institutional structure for bringing together the necessary parties.

### **Oregon Solutions fills the gap**

Several key parties, including the drainage districts, the Port of Portland, Metro, and the City of Portland, requested help from Oregon Solutions, created in 2001 (HB 3945) as the state's designated program using collaborative governance to work on community-based projects. It identifies conveners, provides experienced facilitators, skilled staff, and a neutral forum to help communities bring public, private, and nonprofit partners together to solve community problems. Oregon Solutions helps convene and facilitate important public projects that require collaboration and might not otherwise happen without their assistance and recognized expertise.

### **About the Levee Ready Columbia Project**

Levee Ready Columbia is working to ensure that the levee system along the Columbia River, from Sauvie Island to the Sandy River, meets the requirements for participation in federal programs and continues to reduce the risk of flooding for important regional assets in the area. In so doing, Levee Ready Columbia will help provide a safe and stable future for the residential, commercial, industrial, ecological, and recreational land-uses now present in the area and define a path forward for necessary infrastructure modernization.

The group successfully negotiated joint funding of major engineering analyses to determine remediation needed to the levee and flood safety system. The project partners' efforts have resulted in a Congressional appropriation of \$3 million to the US Army Corps of Engineers for a feasibility study to determine if there is a federal interest for further capital investment. The Levee Ready Columbia Oregon Solutions project team has now moved to form a permanent new governance structure for flood control



responsibilities in the area. Because of the large number and complexity of interests of the different partners at the table (including four drainage districts, cities of Portland, Gresham, Fairview, and Troutdale, Multnomah County, Metro, Port of Portland, and numerous community, environmental, and business organizations) the neutral forum and skilled senior facilitators provided by Oregon Solutions were essential to the group's success. As the Convener of the Levee Ready Columbia project, I can personally say that the Oregon Solutions' process, facilitators, and staff provide an immense resource for our community, encouraging collaborative and creative solutions to challenging issues. They make this project possible.

Thank you for your consideration and please note our full support for funding Oregon Solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jules Bailey", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jules Bailey  
Convener, Levee Ready Columbia

C:

State Senator Arnie Roblan  
State Senator Chuck Thomsen  
State Representative Teresa Alonso Leon  
State Representative Christine Drazan  
State Representative Mark Meek  
State Representative Mike Nearman  
Doug Wilson, LFO  
Audrey Nieswandt, LFO