

April 19, 2019

Honorable Fred Girod
Honorable Paul Hovey
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: County Support for HB 5030 before Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Capital Construction**

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey, and Members of the Committee:

We support lottery bonding funding in the amount of \$14,422,200 for the repair and reopening of the Willamette Falls Locks as requested by the Willamette Falls Locks Commission. We appreciate the Governor for including \$7.5 million in lottery bonds in her recommended budget (HB 5030) and recognizing the importance of this viable and valuable public asset for Oregon's residents, visitors, and industry.

As outlined in the ECONorthwest report, "Economic Benefits of Reopening the Willamette Falls Locks" issued in 2018, there are quantified economic benefits from transportation in the amount of \$12-\$49 million over the next 30 years. During that time period, 80,000 to 220,000 truck trips would be removed from congested Portland area roads, with reductions of 11,000-32,000 metric tons of CO₂. These conservative estimates are based on assumptions that no commodities other than aggregate would move through the Locks. In all likelihood, a regular schedule of operations would encourage other business that produce and transport goods and commodities to take advantage of barging through the Locks. Additionally, there is a critical shortage of moorage sites for commercial vessels below Willamette Falls, and reopening the Locks would provide access to future moorage sites above the Falls for commercial vessels.

The recreation and tourism benefits from reopening the Locks are also quantified by ECONorthwest, ranging from \$12-50 million over the next 30 years. The Willamette Water Trail is one of only 20 National Water Trails in the U.S., extending 187 miles and linking the communities and cities along the river. Guided day trips and hotel barge cruises to Newberg and Oregon's wine country can be expected, based on modeling from European operations of similar cruises and the revenue generated from them.

Redevelopment impacts would certainly benefit the sites adjacent to the Locks, and all riverfront sites along the Willamette River would also benefit from a reopened Locks. When considered together with the Willamette Falls Legacy Project on the Oregon City side of the Falls, the combined impacts for redevelopment in the area are enormous. Additionally, redevelopment sites in Wilsonville and Newberg are most likely to capitalize on the potential benefits from a reopened Locks.

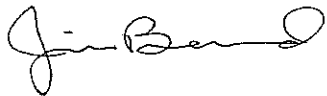
The Locks are of significant historical and cultural value to Native American tribes and Oregonians, with significant engineering importance. In 1974 the Locks were listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1991 listed as a State Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. The National Trust for Historic Preservation declared the Locks a National Treasure in 2012. The Locks are an iconic feature of the State Heritage Area, and a draw for cultural and historic tourism, that combine with the natural beauty of the Falls and surrounding area.

The Willamette Falls Locks are an important link for river communities, connecting Oregon's most populated region to Oregon's thriving wine valley and heritage area. The potential for local economic redevelopment for communities along the Willamette River and for tourism and recreation promise new energy for some of Oregon's most popular destinations in the Willamette Valley, and enrich the travel options we boast in Oregon.

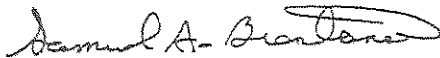
Thank you for your support to funding the repair and reopening of the Willamette Falls Locks!

We urge a DO PASS on HB 5030.

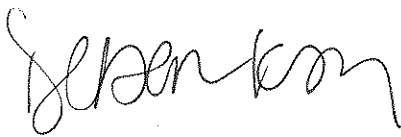
Sincerely,



Jim Bernard, Chair
Clackamas County



Sam Brentano, Commissioner
Marion County



Deborah Kafoury, Chair
Multnomah County