



May 22, 2019

Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
HB 2304-2: Related to Funding for Willamette Falls Locks

Clackamas County supports HB 2304-2: The Board of County Commissioners supports HB 2304-2, which provides \$14.42 million in lottery bond proceeds for the repair and eventual reopening of the Willamette Falls Locks.

The Willamette Falls Locks are located in Clackamas County, on the banks of the Willamette River within the City of West Linn. The Locks provide a historic, economic, and recreational connection between the upper- and lower-Willamette River. Access to these significant connections has been absent since the closure of the Locks in 2011 due to safety issues. Meanwhile, the desire of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dispose of the Locks leaves a lingering need to address the long-term local goals for the Locks.

As a member of the Willamette Falls Locks State Commission established by SB 256 (2017), Clackamas County endorses the Commission's recommendation to pursue capital funds for the Locks at the state level. This action would provide a clear signal to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Oregon's Congressional delegation that the state is serious about preserving this historic water infrastructure resource and ensuring the Willamette River remains as one navigable waterway.

Clackamas County backs the findings of the 2018 ECONorthwest Local Economic Potential Report that estimate the Willamette Falls Locks can produce true economic benefit to the Willamette Valley, including commercial, recreation, tribal, and historic use of the river both within and beyond the boundaries of Clackamas County.

Clackamas County is committed to supporting the State Commission to ensure a new local owner is established and a reasonable operations and maintenance plan is in place before capital funding is bonded. The lottery proceeds called out in HB 2304-2 will ensure that a new non-federal owner has a clear path for addressing the capital needs of the Locks and is able to take immediate action to repair and reopen the locks for river traffic.

We urge a "YES" vote for HB 2304-2.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.