



# HB 4150: Establishing the Willamette Falls Locks Authority A Public Corporation

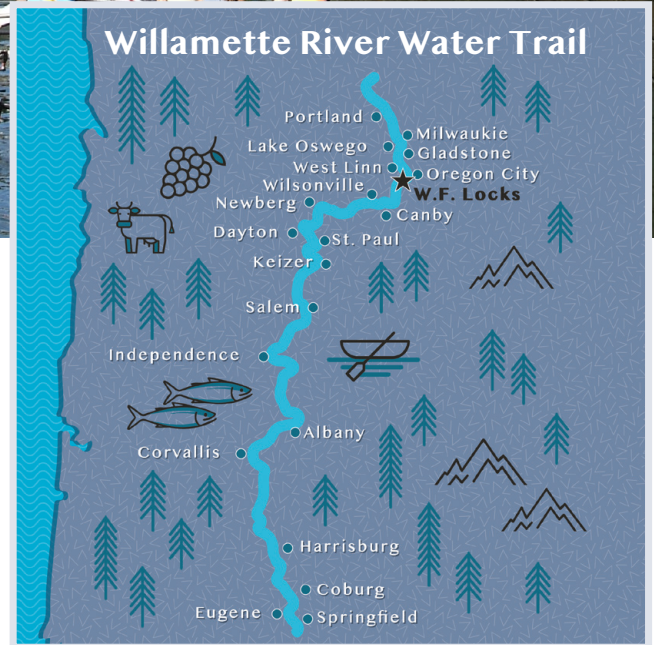


## Willamette Falls Locks Commission recommendation

The Willamette Falls Locks Commission recommends passage of HB 4150 to establish a public corporation called the Willamette Falls Locks Authority to accept transfer and ownership of the locks from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and to repair, modernize, maintain and operate the locks.

The USACE currently owns but intends to divest ownership of the locks, recommending transfer of the locks to a new owner after making some seismic improvements.

After passage of HB 4150, and federal action to transfer the locks, the Willamette Falls Locks Authority would become the new owner and operate the locks in an entrepreneurial manner to ensure financial stability of the Authority and also be accountable to the public. There are three existing public corporations in Oregon: OHSU, the Oregon State Fair and the State Accident Insurance Fund (SAIF). Willamette Falls Locks Authority would become the fourth, once approved.



## Reopening the locks would benefit Oregonians

- ▶ Reduce greenhouse gas carbon dioxide through barging for commodities that are now transported by truck, as well as reducing traffic congestion.
- ▶ The Willamette River Water Trail is one of 20 in the nation. The trail connects many cities and offers opportunities for recreation and learning about Oregon's birds, fish, wildlife, native plants, history and culture along this 187-mile trail. Reopening the locks would reconnect the upper and lower Willamette River, a benefit to the entire region.
- ▶ The locks are an important cultural site and gathering place for Native American Tribes. Reopening the locks would restore traditional canoe journeys, which now require portage because of the blockage at Willamette Falls.
- ▶ Built in 1873, the navigation canal and locks are an asset of the Willamette Falls State Heritage Area, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and designated as a Civil Engineering Landmark.
- ▶ Serve as a transportation resource in the event of a Cascadia earthquake, contributing to the region's resiliency and emergency preparedness.
- ▶ Enhance revitalization opportunities for riverfronts in cities including West Linn, Oregon City, Wilsonville and Newberg.
- ▶ Promote tourism and economic development through historical tourism and outdoor recreational opportunities.

### Economic and environmental benefits of reopening the locks\*

**\$12-\$49 million**

Transportation  
benefits

**\$12-\$50 million**

Recreation  
benefits

**80,000-220,000**

Truck trips removed from  
Portland area roads

**11,000-32,000**

Metric tons  
of CO<sub>2</sub> reduced

\*Figures from ECONorthwest represent benefits over the next 30 years

# What we need from the State of Oregon and USACE

First, passage of HB 4150 is fundamentally necessary to effectuate a transfer from USACE. Second, we are asking for \$14.04 million through the sale of lottery bonds to pay for the cost of capital repairs and improvements in order to reopen and operate the locks. USACE will cover an additional \$2.7 million cost of required modifications and repairs that must be made before the locks are transferred to the Willamette Falls Locks Authority once the public corporation is approved.

The scope of work for the \$14.04 million includes the repair of the fundamental life/safety defects, fire protection and safety improvements, repair of operational mechanical and electrical equipment, lighting, seismic repairs on gates 1-5 (USACE will repair gates 6 and 7), upgraded hydraulic power units and modernized control systems.

## Economic development and jobs are already returning to the Willamette Falls area: Here's one story

In Summer 2019, the West Linn paper mill on the Willamette River reopened under new ownership and a new name: Willamette Falls Paper Company. The reopening brought over 100 living-wage jobs back to the banks of the Willamette River. The average salary for employees is \$60,000.

Willamette Falls Paper Company is not only creating high-paying jobs but is committed to protecting the environment and reducing its eco footprint by making sustainable products. This company is producing eco-friendly paper products, such as sheets of printing paper and paper bags, that rely less on timber and more on recycled non-wood materials, such as pulp created from agricultural biproduct. The family of products, made using agricultural fibers and without bleaching, are appropriately branded as reHARVEST™. The waste straw that is being turned into pulp would otherwise be left to rot or be burned, creating pollution.

Trucks from Starbuck, Wash., now carry the wheat straw pulp to the paper mill. River barging is more efficient, affordable and eco-friendly than trucking materials and products through the congested metro area (I-5, I-84 and I-205).

The average standard trucking cargo capacity is 32 tons per truck and trailer, while one 2-barge load moves 1,000-2,000 tons.



= **32 tons**  
per truck and trailer



= **1k-2k tons**  
per one 2-barge load

That's 62 trucks  
for the equivalent 2,000 tons.



x 62

=



x 1

The ECONorthwest study  
estimated that

**40**  
**trucks per day\***

of aggregate would be removed  
from Portland area roadways if  
the locks were reopened.

## Environmental benefits of barging vs. trucking of straw pulp and concrete\*\*

If Willamette Falls Paper Company, Wilsonville Concrete, CalPortland and other businesses could barge both raw materials and products through the locks, the benefits are:

**88%**

Reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
(5,255 tons/year to 630 tons/year)

**74%**

Reduction in NO<sub>x</sub> emissions  
(32.05 tons/year to 8.42 tons/year)

\*This number is conservative and based on a 2018 study; now that the paper mill has reopened, barging could reduce the number of trucks even more.

\*\*Based on current or assumed demands for 452,500 tons of high probability commodities that would likely be transported by barge if the locks were reopened. This is a conservative estimate. In the long run, as markets develop for moving aggregate, paper, recycled paper, hemp, grain, scrap steel and containers, this volume of barging could increase to 1,167,450 tons per year.

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The Willamette Falls Locks Commission is a 23-member commission established by the Legislature in 2017. More information about the commission's work is available at <http://orsolutions.org/osproject/WFLC>