

Jane O'Keeffe
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April 17, 2021

Senator Johnson (co-chair)
Senator Steiner Hayward (co-chair)
Representative Rayfield (co-chair)

RE: Regional Infrastructure Fund

Dear Co-chairs,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input in the state budget. I write in support of the \$40M for the Regional Infrastructure fund. This funding source has been an important tool for meeting the needs of rural Oregon. This fund will support the long-term recovery efforts needed to address the economic toll from COVID-19 and wildfires.

The Regional Solutions Advisory Committee has served as an important venue for creating consensus among regional public, private, philanthropic, higher education and arts leaders about the priorities in South Central Oregon. The Regional Infrastructure Fund has been a valuable resource for the Regional Solutions program. The vision for Regional Solutions is to align state resources with other public, private, philanthropic and higher education resources to complete projects that support locally identified priorities. The committee has supported multi-party investments in projects that address the priorities.

The Regional Infrastructure Fund is a critical source of funding to support rural priority projects. Past investments have been leveraged to support work force training facilities in Lakeview and Klamath Falls as well as rail and airport infrastructure.

While Oregon has been successful in minimizing the health impacts from COVID, we all know that the economy has taken a substantial hit. South Central Oregon is no exception; the region has suffered significant job losses as a result of the pandemic. The Regional Solutions Advisory Committee stands ready to focus on recovery and ensure that we build a more resilient and equitable future for all.

I recognize that there are always competing priorities for state funding. The Regional Infrastructure Fund is the best way to respond to the needs of individual communities all around the state and ensure that we are investing state resources on recovery in the most efficient and valuable way possible.

Thank you for supporting investments in the unique needs of each region in the state.

Sincerely,

Jane O'Keeffe
Co-Owner, O'Keeffe Family Ranch
Convener, South Central Oregon Regional Solutions Advisory Committee