

May 7th, 2021

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

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

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain:

We are writing to request the Oregon Joint Committee on Ways and Means support full funding for Oregon Solutions. Our names are Henry Balensifer III (Mayor of Warrenton) and Jay Barber (Mayor of Seaside) and we are co-conveners of the Oregon Solutions Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative.

Oregon Solutions has been critical to ensuring the success of this unique and major effort to address elk-human interactions occurring in our region. Oregon Solutions, unlike other groups, has done a masterful job in impartially holding stakeholders accountable, while also deftly managing the relationships necessary to keep stakeholders and agencies moving in a collaborative path forward. Despite this pandemic significantly disrupting our work, Oregon Solutions has been laser focused in moving this process across the finish line and into the next stage of performance. This has been invaluable, as local leaders such as ourselves have increasingly struggled to do more with less both in our day-jobs and our city staffs. The elk issue is getting worse, with more traffic accidents involving elk, and more people being charged and pets being killed or seriously wounded. We urge you to fully fund Oregon Solutions.

About Oregon Solutions

Oregon Solutions is the state's designated program that brings together collaborative teams of public, private, and civic interests to align effort and resources in support of vital community needs. Since 2001, it has been a trusted and vital resource as a first stop in helping assess a problem and recommending a path forward toward a constructive outcome. They work on projects all across Oregon. They are often highly complex, and involve multiple parties who have some level of ownership or stake in these projects. Projects also run the gamete of public issues.

About the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative

In April 2019, Governor Kate Brown designated the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative as an Oregon Solutions Project. The project team consists of 26 key stakeholders including state and federal agency staff, local community and government leaders, academics, Governor's Regional Solutions staff, and area nonprofit representatives to focus on the goals of: reducing conflict between elk-human interactions, increasing safety, and promoting cohabitation between elk and people in the Clatsop Plains area.

Additionally, Oregon Solutions projects often attract significant resources that benefit local communities. For example, the Oakridge Wood Smoke Mitigation Collaborative attracted a \$5

million federal grant to help improve air quality; the Oregon Solution project to rebuild the Vernonia School after it was destroyed by flooding leveraged over \$34 million; and, the Levee Ready Columbia project has attracted over \$12 million in funding.

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

Sincerely,

Henry Balensifer III, Mayor of Warrenton



Jay Barber, Mayor of Seaside



C: Senator Michael Dembrow
Sen. Chuck Thomsen
Representative Teresa Alonso Leon
Rep. Bobby Levy
Rep. E. Werner Reschke
Rep. Ricki Ruiz
Karmen Fore, Oregon Solutions Director