



# Marion County

## OREGON

### Board of Commissioners

February 22, 2023

(503) 588-5212  
(503) 588-5237-FAX

Senator Kathleen Taylor, Chair  
Senator Daniel Bonham, Vice-Chair

#### **RE: Marion County Opposes SB 850**

#### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Colm Willis, Chair  
Kevin Cameron  
Danielle Bethell

Dear Chair Senator Taylor, Vice-Chair Senator Bonham, and Members of the Committee:

The Marion County Board of Commissioners opposes Senate Bill 850. SB 850 will delay and increase the cost of several infrastructure projects funded by American Rescue Plan Act (APRA) dollars.

#### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

Jan Fritz

Marion County received \$66,559,569 of ARPA dollars and funded thirty-seven community projects. Of those, seventeen will improve water, sewer, or broadband. The investment in these projects will have lasting economic improvements for our residents for generations. However, the design and construction of these projects have been fraught with setbacks such that Marion County is advocating for an extension of the federal deadline. Under the proposed language in SB 850, eleven of our projects will now meet the 1-million-dollar threshold imposing another onerous requirement, adding costs, and further complicating the project delivery.

Oregon public contracting rules already require public bodies to pay the prevailing wage, use the state apprenticeship program, and employ underrepresented individuals for projects. Changing the estimated project cost threshold from \$10 million to \$1 million will only serve the special interest groups already benefiting from the current law. It will increase the number of projects that must comply with the cumbersome laws and delay the economic improvements these projects have in our community.

We believe ARPA intended to provide large amounts of reasonably flexible dollars to communities without unnecessary rules and restrictions from the state bureaucracy. SB 850 contradicts that intent and will exacerbate the delays we are encountering with our current ARPA projects. The Marion County Board of Commissioners urges the committee to vote no on SB 850.

Sincerely,

Colm Willis

Kevin Cameron

Danielle Bethell