



**Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Tim Knapp Supporting HB 2304-2:
*Proposed Legislation Provides Ability to Re-Open Willamette Falls Locks, Leverage
Federal Funds and Advance State Goals for Tourism, Commerce and Resilience***

Scheduled for public hearing on May 22, 2019,
before the Joint Committee On Transportation

Co-Chairs Beyer and McKeown, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Wilsonville City Council, I am testifying in support of HB 2304-2, which provides \$14.42 million in lottery proceeds bonding for the repair and eventual reopening of the Willamette Falls Locks. The City of Wilsonville is a founding member of the Willamette Falls Locks Working Group and was one of three Willamette River cities appointed to serve in 2017 on the Willamette Fall Locks Commission by SB 256.


The work of the Commission is critical to maintaining a key river transportation infrastructure of the Locks, which allows passage connecting the lower and upper portions of the Willamette River. In the Draft Disposition Study issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in May 2017, the Corps indicated a preference for transfer of the Locks to another entity — or cementing the Locks shut permanently, foreclosing any future options for use.

The Commission’s charge is to recommend a governance structure for a transferee and negotiating with the Corps for transfer of the Locks upgraded to an acceptable state of repair. Passage of HB 2304-2 sends a strong message of reinforcement to Congress and the federal government that the State of Oregon is serious about reopening the Locks, and provides the State with an opportunity to leverage potential federal infrastructure funding.

The City of Wilsonville has vested interests along with other stakeholders in reopening and sustainably operating the Willamette Falls Locks, which significantly impact the recreational, tourism and commercial economy of the community and the region and provide a non-roadway mode of transportation that may be crucial for recovery after the projected Cascadia 9.0 seismic event. Closure of the Locks since 2011 has placed a severe hardship on commercial, recreational and tribal river users, including area recreationalists and businesses. A local, long-time employer, Wilsonville Concrete, Inc., and Marine Industrial Construction, LLC, which used the Willamette Falls Locks for 129 years, has 15–30 jobs that could be impacted if the Locks are not reopened on a permanent basis for the conduct of commerce.

The City of Wilsonville respectfully urges a DO PASS vote on HB 2304-2. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Tim Knapp, Mayor
City of Wilsonville