



Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Tim Knapp Supporting HB 4150:

Proposed Legislation Provides Ability to Reopen the Willamette Falls Locks, Leverage Federal Funds and Advance State Goals for Tourism, Commerce and Resilience

Scheduled for public hearing on February 4, 2020, 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 4150, which implements the Willamette Falls Locks Commission recommendation to the Oregon Legislative Assembly to create the Willamette Falls Locks Authority as a state-chartered public corporation and to secure capital funding in the amount of \$14 million in lottery proceeds bonding for the repair and eventual reopening of the 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 by the legislature to serve on the Willamette Fall Locks Commission through SB 256 of 2017.

Assuming successful passage of the needed legislation and on the commitments of other organizations as described in the “Willamette Falls Locks Business Plan,” the City is prepared to continue our support of the Locks Authority’s proposed Business Plan Phase 1 operations with a contribution of \$7,000 per year beginning in July 2020 and lasting a maximum of five years.


Reopening the Locks to crucial to maintaining a key river transportation infrastructure 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.

Passage of HB 4150 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 an opportunity to leverage federal infrastructure funding for preliminary repairs.

The City of Wilsonville has vested interests along with other public- and private-sector stakeholders in reopening and sustainably operating the Willamette Falls Locks, which significantly impact the recreational, tourism and commercial economy of 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 4150. Thank you.

Sincerely,


 Tim Knapp, Mayor
 City of Wilsonville