

February 10, 2016

The Honorable Peter Courtney, Senate President  
Oregon State Senate  
900 Court St. NE, S-201  
Salem, OR 97301



**RE: Support for Willamette Falls Locks Economic Development Funding**

Dear Senator Courtney:

The City of Wilsonville strongly supports efforts that advance reopening of the Willamette Falls Locks, a key historical transportation linchpin for use of the Willamette River for recreational, commercial, industrial and cultural activities. Closure of the Locks since 2011 has rendered the mid-Willamette River non-navigable and negatively impacted local jobs and recreational and tourism opportunities for many communities located above the Locks, including Wilsonville.

Closure of the Locks has placed a severe hardship on Wilsonville-based river users and businesses such as Wilsonville Concrete, Inc., and Marine Industrial Construction, LLC, which have used the Locks for 127 years for transporting aggregate, logs and other goods and conducting dredging and towing operations. These local businesses report that 15–30 jobs could be impacted if the Locks are not reopened on a permanent basis.

The Wilsonville City Council unanimously approved in November 2014 Resolution No. 2496, “Resolution in Support of Reopening the Willamette Falls Locks,” that buttresses efforts to reopen the Locks, including creation of the State Task Force in 2015 to work with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to develop a plan for sustainable operations of the Locks.

The City of Wilsonville respectfully urges consideration of including the Willamette Falls Locks Funding Proposal as a component of an Economic Development Funding package under discussion by legislative leaders. Specifically, we support funding of an economic benefits study to demonstrate the local and regional economic significance of the Locks that would supplement an economic impact analysis by USACE that focuses only on national benefits. The proposal also provides funds for short-term repairs that are needed to reopen the Locks on an interim basis and two years of seasonal operational funds. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Tim Knapp, Mayor

cc: Representatives Davis and Kennemer; Senators Thatcher and Olsen; Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners; Metro Council; City Councils of Canby, Keizer, Oregon City, Newberg, Salem and West Linn; National Trust for Historic Preservation; One Willamette River Coalition; Hooley and Naito, LLC; Wilsonville Concrete, Inc., and Marine Industrial, LLC