



February 21, 2019

Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Senator James Manning, Jr. (Co-Chair)
Representative David Gomberg (Co-Chair)
Senator Jeff Golden
Senator Bill Hansell
Representative Paul Evans
Representative Gary Leif
Representative Rachel Prusak
Representative Duane Stark

900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: 2019-2021 Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF)

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development,

On behalf of the Levee Ready Columbia partnership, I would like to enthusiastically offer our support for the Governor's Regional Solutions Program and, more specifically, one of its important tools, the Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) within Business Oregon's budget.

The Levee Ready Columbia project is a regional effort in the Portland metropolitan region to address flood risk, levee modernization, long-term governance issues, and connected environmental and economic issues in an area vital to our region's future. Regional Solutions plays a dynamic role in the Levee Ready Columbia project. As a project partner, at the table of our Oregon Solutions process, Regional Solutions staff are a vital connection between State offices, our federal and regional partners, and our local stakeholders and community. We have found a true benefit and partnership in the role of the Regional Solutions program in our community due to the program's ability to identify priorities, solve problems, and seize opportunities to advance the goals of the Levee Ready Columbia partnership.

The Regional Infrastructure Fund is a huge opportunity to modernize our aging infrastructure and support inclusive economic development. The Levee Ready Columbia partnership was recently selected to be awarded \$167,314 through the RIF when lottery bonds are sold in spring 2019. This funding will catalyze and leverage other monies to support geotechnical, engineering, and risk-informed decision-making efforts on our 27 miles of levees. This levee system runs from near the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette River east to the Sandy River delta in the Cities of Portland, Gresham, Fairview, and Troutdale. The system is more than 80 years old and in need of significant modernization. The RIF supports Levee Ready Columbia's efforts to bring the system up to 21st century standards.

Behind those 27 miles of levee are some 13,000 acres that generate more \$16B in economic activity each year with 59,000 jobs. Portland International Airport relies on the levees to move the more than 20 million passengers that pass through PDX each year. It is home to our region's transportation and distribution center with Amazon, FedEx, USPS, and UPS regional distribution facilities. Three Interstate highways and two Tier 1 rail lines pass through the districts. Importantly, more than 8,000 people call the



levee protected land home as do a wide variety of flora and fauna. While the area is an economic hub, there are also hundreds of acres of parks, natural areas, and many quiet places that are community assets.

The RIF funding will help ensure that the levee system and the land behind the levees remain accredited by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This allows land owners to access discounted flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and allows the land use entities to continue to use the land as currently zoned. The funding also supports the project's efforts to remain in good standing with the US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Rehabilitation & Inspection Program (the RIP, or PL 84-99). The RIF funding will support our efforts to make risk-informed decisions about projects to repair and remediate the levees and to accomplish multiple benefits such as recreational access and landscape resiliency. The funding will support our participation in the recently-awarded USACE Feasibility Study. This Study will determine if there is federal interest in re-investing in the levee system, and, if there is, we will be on a path to have the federal government cost-share some of our levee modernization needs.

We appreciate your support of the RIF and its benefit to regionally significant projects for our communities. The RIF funding will increase the capacity and effectiveness of our local and regional efforts throughout Oregon. We recognize that the RIF is only one tool that Regional Solutions uses to help communities and businesses throughout the state, but we strongly feel it is an important one because it helps projects get to "Yes," catalyzing local and regional investments and increasing capacity. We look forward to Regional Solution's continued technical and facilitatory support of Levee Ready Columbia and encourage you to continue to support the Regional Infrastructure Fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jules Bailey", is written over a horizontal blue line.

Jules Bailey
Convener, Levee Ready Columbia

Levee Ready Columbia Project Partners

Audubon Society	Columbia Slough Watershed	Port of Portland
Bridgeton Neighborhood Association	Council	Sandy Drainage Improvement Company
City of Fairview	East Columbia Neighborhood Association	Sauvie Island Drainage Improvement Company
City of Gresham	Federal Emergency Management Agency	State of Oregon
City of Portland	Jubitz Corporation	– Department of Environmental Quality
– Bureau of Environmental Services	Metro	– Department of Land Conservation and Development
– Bureau of Parks and Recreation	Multnomah County	– Governor's Regional Solutions Team
– Bureau of Development Services	Multnomah County Drainage District #1	US Army Corps of Engineers
– Bureau of Transportation	Peninsula Drainage District #1	
– Water Bureau	Peninsula Drainage District #2	
City of Troutdale		
Columbia Corridor Association		