



HARNEY COUNTY COURT

Office of Commissioner Mark Owens

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March 15, 2019

Co-Chair Lew Frederick
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE, S-419
Salem, Oregon 97301

Co-Chair Susan McLain
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE, H-477
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Mr. Frederick and Ms. McLain:

I am writing to request the Oregon Joint Committee on Ways and Means support full funding for the important state wide program **Oregon Consensus**, funded as part of the dispute resolution services allocation. As a Harney County Commissioner, I have experienced firsthand the benefit that Oregon Consensus provides in helping to support community-based problem solving. Oregon Consensus has helped and is actively engaged within our community working with us to address complicated and many times contentious issues. They have the ability to leverage the resources and support of diverse parties that are needed in order to provide results on the issues we are facing. Oregon Consensus teams have been instrumental in helping Harney County build successful collaborative processes to address numerous topics. They help us work with a diverse group of stakeholders understand and provide leadership on the need to be inclusive in order for the process to provide lasting results that can be supported by all. Specifically, they have provided leadership in the following planning process that are occurring in Harney County:

- Facilitation of our effort to work across interest to address wildfire prevention, suppression, and restoration related activities through the *Harney County Wildfire Collaborative*.
- Facilitation to support the establishment of the *Harney County Youth Initiative* focused on enhancing the lives and educational opportunities of youth in our community.
- *Sage Grouse* related activities including the implementation of the State Action Plan that avoided the ESA listing of the Greater Sage Grouse and development of the Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances.
- Facilitation to support the establishment of the *Harney Basin Placed-based Water Collaborative* that is working to collaboratively address surface and ground water challenges in the county.
- Facilitation of the *Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan* and ongoing implementation of the plan with a diverse group of stakeholders.
- Facilitation of the *Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative*, which was designated by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board as a Focus Investment Area and is focused on preserving traditional agricultural practices and restoration of important wetlands in the basin.

The Oregon Consensus program provides very distinct and critical service to communities across the State in reaching agreement on sustainable solutions to contentious issues. I am thankful the legislature recognizes the significance of this program and hope it will continue to be supported.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Owens", written over a horizontal line.

Mark Owens, Harney County Commissioner

C: State Senator Arnie Roblan
State Senator Chuck Thomsen
State Representative Teresa Alonso Leon
State Representative Christine Drazan
State Representative Mark Meek

Doug Wilson, LFO
Audrey Nieswandt, LFO
State Representative Mike Nearman