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April 14, 2021
Joint Ways & Means Committee

SB 5555 STATE BUDGET - CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1

Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward and Rayfield, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Brodie Harvey. I work for Knife River, a construction company that employs 1,300 people in Oregon. The majority of the work we do is to improve infrastructure the public uses every day to connect them with where they want to go – whether that’s someone driving home from work or someone else delivering goods to market.

Because our state’s public infrastructure is mission critical, I ask the committee to consider replenishing the Connect Oregon grant program. This competitive program has provided necessary funding to get important projects across the finish line – projects that benefit Oregonians in innumerable ways that would not have happened without the program. Even though Knife River’s project was the first one below the “cut line” in the last round, several other projects received funding and that moved the needle for Oregon’s infrastructure.

This year we have two projects that are great fits for Connect Oregon funding, both that would increase safety and create efficiencies for transporting construction aggregates: One is the completion of a rail project and the other is a barge loadout system. I respectfully encourage the committee to authorize and appropriate funds for another round of competitive Connect Oregon grants – for these and other important projects.

Lastly, as a board member of the Oregon Rail Users League (ORULE), I ask that the Oregon Industrial Rail Spur Fund be refunded this session. This program was established in 2003 to help shippers connect to railroads for moving goods to market. It has provided funding for 18 projects across all 5 regions of the state. The program is administered by ODOT, has been well-regarded and needs funding to continue to provide critical links in our state’s supply chain.

Oregon’s transportation network touches all of our lives. Thank you for your time and consideration on allocating funds for Connect Oregon and the Oregon Industrial Rail Spur Fund, and please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Brodie Harvey

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