

April 15, 2021

Submitted To: Co-Chairs – Senator Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose), Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward (D-Beaverton) and Representative Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis)

Submitted By: David Sawyer, Turner City Administrator

RE: Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program

Oregon is no stranger to disaster response. It is, however, estranged from serious investment in pre-disaster mitigation. There are really no state-based programs to apply for serious money to fix complex and expensive problems. In addition, federal money often is left on the table since there is no assistance from the State in providing the needed 25% local match to access that funding.

Adding to the need for State assistance is the fact that many natural hazard issues do not reside in our large urban centers but in more rural settings where funding is even more scarce. Turner understands this need better than most. With a history of major flooding, and now some small FEMA grant awards to analyze the appropriate mitigation response, we are close to a real construction project that could eliminate flooding in our downtown core. But the small City of Turner is never going to get \$5 million in a federal grant process going up against Chattanooga, TN and Houston, TX.

I believe the COVID relief funding provides a unique opportunity to create a state-based pre-disaster mitigation program. Such a program could directly fund key projects which might have a broad or urgent need. It could also provide key match support to help counties and cities be able to go after federal grant dollars.

The state needs to be a serious partner if it's serious about pre-disaster mitigation. Every dollar invested in pre-disaster work will provide a return for decades as flooding, wildfire and the effects of other disasters is mitigated. Now is the time to use COVID relief money to make this commitment to Oregon's future.