



Joint Letter of Support for the Wallowa Lake Dam Rehabilitation Project

from the Offices of Senator Hansell, SD 29 and Representative Levy, HD 58

Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey and members of the Subcommittee on Capital Construction,

If anyone has traveled to Wallowa County, they understand the beauty that the furthest, North Eastern county has to offer to our state. The Wallowa Lake Dam, which is situated on the natural outlet of Wallowa Lake, was constructed in 1919 to offer sustainable irrigation to help develop agricultural needs in the Upper Wallowa Valley. However, what is often failed to be mentioned is that before the dam was constructed, the Upper Wallowa Valley was consistently in a flood zone. Without making sure that the Wallowa Lake Dam is stable and that the critical repairs are made, the cities of Joseph, Enterprise and Wallowa will be at risk for a major flooding event.

This project has gone through the vetting process multiple times. This project, which has a detailed workplan available upon request, involves collaborators and cooperaters with the Wallowa Lake Irrigation District, ODFW, Nez Perce Tribe, CTUIR, and a Memorandum of Agreement was executed in 2020 to provide annual releases of stored water to protect fish, wildlife, and aquatic resources downstream of the project.

This project, pending adequate funding, is anticipated to be completed in early 2023. Like many other large infrastructure projects in the state, we are nearing the point of no return. If we do not commit to funding the restoration of the Wallowa Lake Dam, we will be directly responsible for the consequences of the dam breaching and the potential flooding in the downstream communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this project,

Senator Bill Hansell, SD 29

Representative Bobby Levy, HD 58

