



February 10, 2021

Joint Committee on Transportation  
900 Court St., NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for Willamette Falls Locks Authority as public corporation

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Beyer and Representative McLain and Members,

As the Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) for the Portland Region, Travel Portland is pleased to support the establishment of the Willamette Falls Locks Authority as a public corporation. Travel Portland partners closely with the Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) and communities throughout the Portland Region and we recognize the tremendous opportunities presented for our shared tourism economy by catalytic projects such as the preservation of the Willamette Falls Locks. The Portland Region invested \$100,000 to help establish the Locks Commission in 2017 and we look forward to the establishment of the Locks Authority to help carry on the important work of preserving and managing this unique regional asset.

A recent study done by Travel Oregon, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation, Oregon Fish and Wildlife, and Earth Economics, found that the state's outdoor recreation industry (including manufacturing and retail sales) generates \$15.6 billion in consumer spending annually, employs 224,000 Oregonians in full and part-time jobs, and generates \$552 million in state and local tax revenue. For cities along the Willamette River, investment in the Willamette Falls Locks will provide a connected corridor that powers a large economic engine for local communities through outdoor recreation. The Willamette Falls Locks Commission 2018 economic impact study found that the quantified benefits associated with recreation, including overnight cruises and use by personal watercrafts (motorboats, kayaks, etc.) range from about \$12 to over \$50 million over 30 years. The Willamette Falls Locks provide a new tourism product that not only connects rural communities along the Willamette River to Portland's robust tourism market, but also provides additional access to the river corridor which will help disperse visitation in high-use areas.

Travel Portland supports establishing the Willamette Falls Locks Authority as a public corporation so that the project can move forward and increase access along the Willamette River corridor – a project that will result in the creation of additional visitor experiences and economic opportunities for Portland and communities south of the metro area. This project serves long-term goals of economic development, historical tourism opportunities, and arts and cultural investments. It will increase access to the Willamette River corridor to provide visitors and residents with the opportunity to experience the awe-inspiring sights of our natural lands for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jeff Miller  
President & CEO  
Travel Portland

Portland Region RDMO