



P.O. Box 788 • Heppner, OR 97836
541-676-5613
www.co.morrow.or.us

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Don Russell, Chair
Commissioner Jim Doherty
Commissioner Melissa Lindsay

February 19, 2021

Senator Kathleen Taylor, Co-Chair
Representative Jeff Reardon, Co-Chair
Joint Subcommittee on Natural Resources

RE: Senate Bill 5530

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon,

Senate Bill 5530 is the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) Budget. Morrow County supports the proposed budget, in particular the policy options that focus on rural Oregon.

Morrow County is one of Oregon's more rural counties with a population of 12,825. Morrow County also has one of the highest minority populations in the state, along with Malheur and Hood River Counties. The Oregon Rural Community Explorer projected in 2018 that Morrow County may be the first minority majority county in the state. The Port of Morrow, the largest inland Port, continues to diversify the economy and create family-wage jobs. In 2017, the Port's Economic and Community Benefits Analysis estimated that 70% of its workforce, approximately 6,000 full-time employees, travel to work from outside of Boardman. Housing availability and transit are vital components in resolving the job-housing imbalance.

In this context, we point out the two policy option packages put forth in the DLCD budget that would likely provide direct benefit to Morrow County. Policy Option Package (POP) 90, Equity Initiatives, would complement transit planning underway in Morrow County. POP funds could help fund transit planning that would serve a large Latino population that works at the Port of Morrow and the greater Boardman area.

Policy Option Package 110, Housing Planning, would fund the Department's work with cities to address housing. In contrast to housing planning required in HB 2001 and HB 2003 (2019), we are very pleased this POP includes cities with a population less than 10,000. Indeed, all of the five cities in Morrow County have a population less than 10,000 and each city would benefit from additional housing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Don Russell, Chair

Cc:

Senator Bill Hansell

Representative Greg Smith

Representative Bobby Levy

AOC Natural Resources Committee

AOC Transportation and Community Development Committee

Katie Imes, The Loop Transportation Coordinator

City of Boardman

City of Heppner

City of Ione

City of Irrigon

Town of Lexington

Morrow County Planning Commission

Port of Morrow