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On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital
Construction

Measure: SB5702

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Co-Chairs and members if the Capital Construction Committee,

The Port of Cascade Locks owns and oversees the operations of the Sternwheeler Columbia Gorge. The Sternwheeler was commissioned in 1983 as a replica of the Bailey Gatzert, a historic sternwheeler that gained fame for it service on the Columbia River in the early 1900's. The Sternwheeler has become an iconic symbol of the Columbia Gorge and Cascade Locks, where its base of operations is located. The boat is a key contributor to the local economy in the Gorge as it typically draws thousands of visitors each year to savor the experience and take in the spectacular scenery.

The Sternwheeler is in need of significant upgrades and refurbishment of its interior spaces. Years of wear and tear have degraded interior finishes like flooring, wall and ceiling coverings and furnishings. In addition, restrooms and the kitchen area need to be upgraded to improve public health and safety and interior lighting needs to be modernized. All of these items will be designed to reflect the historic theme of the Sternwheeler.

In recent seasons, Covid health concerns have significantly impacted ridership on the Sternwheeler. This has led to reduced revenues that would normally be available to fund these much-needed improvements. Therefore, the Port of Cascade Locks is requesting \$500,000 in state funding to be able to move forward with the historical interior refurbishment. Total cost for this work is estimated at \$1,000,000. This work would be scheduled for late 2022, when the Sternwheeler is docked for the winter, enabling it to be at full capacity for the 2023 summer season.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important project for the Columbia River Gorge. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Mark Johnson

Government Affairs Director

Port of Cascade Locks