

HCR 20-1  
(LC 4068)  
3/20/23 (DJ/mb/ps)

Requested by Representative WALTERS

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO  
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 20**

1 On page 1 of the printed concurrent resolution, delete lines 2 through 32.

2 On page 2, delete lines 1 through 11 and insert:

3 “Whereas Willamette Falls has been home to a diversity of peoples and  
4 cultures, beginning with Native Americans, and holds significant historical  
5 and culture importance for the tribes that have stewarded the land since  
6 time immemorial; and

7 “Whereas Willamette Falls, with its bounty of Chinook salmon and  
8 Pacific lamprey, was the center of activity for Native Americans west of the  
9 Cascade Mountains for thousands of years, with villages at the base of the  
10 falls serving as a regional gathering place for hundreds of tribes, bands and  
11 traders across the Pacific Northwest; and

12 “Whereas Native Americans were forcefully removed from Willamette  
13 Falls by the United States Government under the Willamette Valley Treaty  
14 of 1855; and

15 “Whereas Native Americans continue to live and fish in Willamette Falls,  
16 and contribute to the cultural landscape of the Willamette Valley, to this  
17 day; and

18 “Whereas the historic Willamette Falls Locks, located on the west bank  
19 of the Willamette River in West Linn, were built in the early 1870s by the  
20 Willamette Falls Canal and Locks Company (later renamed Portland General  
21 Electric) to move river traffic around the 40-foot high horseshoe-shaped

1 basalt ridge between Oregon City and West Linn; and

2 “Whereas the locks were the first significant navigational improvement  
3 in the United States west of the Rockies, a crucial avenue for transportation  
4 of goods throughout the region prior to the construction of the Willamette  
5 Falls Railway in 1893, and a boon for the economy of the State of Oregon;  
6 and

7 “Whereas hundreds of engineers, laborers and stonemasons, under the  
8 guidance of chief superintendent Captain Isaac W. Smith, chief engineer E.G.  
9 Tilton and engineering assistant J.A. Lessourd, worked day and night to  
10 ensure the successful on-time completion of the project that was so vital to  
11 the economy of the region; and

12 “Whereas the locks were opened to the public on January 1, 1873,  
13 prompting the biggest public celebration in Oregon since it achieved  
14 statehood 14 years prior; and

15 “Whereas the first vessel to travel through the locks was the steamer  
16 Maria Wilkins, which entered the first lock at 12:17 p.m. on New Year’s Day,  
17 1873, to the elation of spectators lined up along the walls of the locks; and

18 “Whereas in 1890, a devastating flood tore through Willamette Falls,  
19 causing serious damage to the locks, flooding the canal with debris and de-  
20 stroying two lock gates, as well as the home of lock tender Jack Chambers;  
21 and

22 “Whereas in 1899, after a decade of ever worsening structural damage had  
23 caused the locks to fall into disrepair, the United States Army Corps of En-  
24 gineers began examining the feasibility of purchasing the locks from then-  
25 owner Portland Railway Light and Power Company in order to restore the  
26 locks to their former glory; and

27 “Whereas in 1912, the War Department approved the \$375,000 purchase  
28 of the locks, which was completed in 1915; and

29 “Whereas the corps’ reconstruction of the canal and locks began in April  
30 1916 under the supervision of Major H.C. Jewett and assistant engineer E.B.

1 Thomson, and was completed on September 1, 1917; and

2 “Whereas the locks were placed on the National Register of Historic  
3 Places in 1974 and designated as an Oregon Historic Civil Engineering  
4 Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1991, honoring their  
5 critical role in Oregon history; and

6 “Whereas in December 2011, after decades in and out of service, the locks  
7 were closed, with deterioration leading the corps to reclassify them as non-  
8 operational out of concern for public safety; and

9 “Whereas following their reclassification, a groundswell of support for  
10 the locks, which included backing by the Clackamas County Board of Com-  
11 missioners, the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation, the Willamette Falls  
12 and Landings Heritage Area Coalition, Portland General Electric, and a host  
13 of local politicians, community leaders, residents of West Linn, Wilsonville,  
14 Clackamas County and Metro and members of Native American tribes in  
15 Oregon, led Oregon’s Eighty-first Legislative Assembly in 2021 to establish  
16 the Willamette Falls Locks Authority, halting the corps’ plans to perma-  
17 nently close and dismantle the locks; and”.

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