

Written Testimony of Matthew Musgrave

Prepared for the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction

Newport, Oregon

April 14, 2023

***Re: Support for Nehalem River Bridge Pile Restoration
on the Port of Tillamook Bay/Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad***

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Matthew Musgrave; I'm a resident of Oregon and moved here in 2011 from Hawaii to attend college at University of Portland. While I've been asked many times why I would trade a tropical paradise for any other state in our union I've very much fallen in love with Oregon over the many years I lived here and intend to continue living here. In my free time I'm a volunteer with Oregon Coast Scenic Railway and a frequent tourist to the Oregon coast.

Today I'd like to respectfully urge you to pursue your support for a \$750,000 appropriation to restore the pilings under the 2nd Crossing of the Nehalem River Railroad Bridge near Mohler in Tillamook County, as requested through Tillamook County legislators Senator Weber and Representative Javadi.

While I could be considered biased since I'm a volunteer for the Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad I would urge the members of this committee to look at the larger picture. By restoring this bridge and subsequently helping provide access to several miles of railroad track up the Nehalem River Valley would result in numerous benefits in wildlife protection as well as a diversified economic growth.

Regarding wildfire protection, OCSR maintains a 40,000-gallon firefighting train that, with this bridge repaired, will be able to access further up the Nehalem Valley to help with firefighting efforts in heavily forested areas, including areas of state forest. It is my understanding that OCSR already works closely with several fire departments regarding the deployment of the train under red flag conditions. Repairs to this bridge would allow a further reach in keeping our forests and community safe.

Regarding diversified economic growth it is my understanding that the Nehalem Valley is planned to be a dual rail/trail corridor with OCSR and the Salmonberry Trail Foundation with this bridge having a dual role for both organizations, trains for OCSR and hikers for STF. By repairing this bridge and providing access to both groups a greater variety of people will be traveling to this region of the Oregon coast and supporting the local economy. Upon completion it is estimated the county will benefit from around \$300,000 per year in economic impact with an additional \$200,000 per year in future economic growth through increased retail sales, restaurant visitation, and overnight stays.

The biggest strength of this project is that it is shovel ready. Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad has already had the necessary engineering completed at its own expense, has started conversations regarding permitting with the Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, and National Marine Fisheries. This means that the work could be completed in a single season once funding is secured.

The bulk of the construction work was quoted at \$813,000 in March of 2023, accounting for prevailing wages, with the estimated total cost, including contingency, being \$910,000. Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad, a 501(c)(3) non-profit heritage group, is providing \$160,000 from its budget towards the project, giving approximately an 18% match.

This project has the potential to bring great economic growth to an underserved and rural area of our wonderful state. Not only that, but it will also help preserve our natural resources against the ever-increasing threat of wildfire that has become so present in recent summers, bringing benefits well beyond Tillamook County. It is therefore of no surprise that the project has the support of Nehalem Bay Fire District; the Tillamook Coast Visitors Association; the City of Wheeler, the Port of Garibaldi, the Port of Tillamook Bay; and many others.

With that said, I hope that you will seriously consider this funding request and thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Musgrave". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M".

Matthew Musgrave