



**Written Testimony of Port of Tillamook Bay & DBA Tillamook Air Museum**

**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***

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Port of Tillamook Bay and the Tillamook Air Museum. Both Michele Bradley, The Port of Tillamook Bay General Manager, and Rita Welch, Tillamook Air Museum Executive Director, approve this letter of support from our entities which are both located in Tillamook, Oregon, in Tillamook County.

I have prepared this testimony to respectfully pursue your support for a \$750,000 appropriation to restore the piling under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Crossing of the Nehalem River Railroad Bridge near Mohler in Tillamook County, as requested through Tillamook County legislators Senator Weber and Representative Javadi.

This project will restore several miles of railroad access up the Nehalem River Valley and would result in numerous benefits, including:

Economic growth in our county's tourism sector, primarily for passenger train excursions and "rail rider" pedal excursions, the increase will also extend to overnight stays and money spent elsewhere throughout the county. Besides the economic benefits, this project's completion will pave the way to provide more access to trails and outdoor recreation for our community and tourists alike, including Salmonberry Trail on the rail/trail corridor, including ADA access. This project's completion will also assist our county's emergency services with access to areas that are currently inaccessible in the case of a storm, tsunami evacuation, fire, or flood.

The restoration of Nehalem River Bridge is a worthy endeavor not only for the preservation of a historic and once vital part of Tillamook County, but also will provide significant increase in tourism revenues, be an outdoor recreational attraction for our community, and aid with safe access to our county lands in case of natural disaster or emergency.

This project 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 toward 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, 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.

Sincerely,

Michele Bradley, General Manager, Port of Tillamook Bay

*Michele Bradley*

Rita Welch, Museum Director, Tillamook Air Museum

*Rita Welch*