

April 13, 2023

Co-Chair Lew Frederick
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE, S-419
Salem, Oregon 97301

Co-Chair Susan McLain
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE, H-493
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Senator Frederick and Representative McLain:

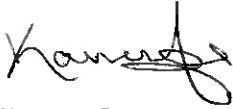
I am writing to request that the Oregon Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education support **funding at the full continuing service level** for two very important statewide programs: 1) **Oregon Solutions**, and 2) **Oregon Consensus**, funded as part of the dispute resolution services allocation. Through my years working at the congressional, state, and local government level over the past decades – and as former director of this program – I have witnessed the multiple benefits these programs bring to our communities in applying collaborative approaches to help communities work together to address challenging and contentious issues.

Oregon Consensus has worked to bring stakeholders together to successfully break through impasse, find efficiencies, or save costs associated with extended litigation in addressing some of the most contentious issues in our state. For example, they have played major role in the effort to establish the Elliott State Forest as a world class research forest; they've helped Oregon revamp its troubled recycling program into one of the most progressive in the nation; and, they worked to revise our population forecasting system saving the state millions of dollars. During one of our state's most tragic moments, the Governor called in Oregon Consensus to help the community after the mass shooting at Umpqua Community College. They worked with community leaders to apply for federal FEMA recovery dollars. Their work with collaborative efforts in Harney County was critical to the resilience of the community when faced with militant occupation.

Oregon Solutions is a program unique to Oregon that provides project management services which help bring representatives from the public, private, and civic sector together to implement community-based solutions that simply would not happen without them. Recently, Oregon Solutions worked with coastal community collaboratives to establish the Oregon Coast Trail as a world class destination experience; helped Butte Falls purchase forest land surrounding the town economic stability and fire resilienc in this rural area; are working to help plan for a medical training center in Douglas county; and are supporting a collaborative group in rebuilding the McKenzie corridor in the aftermath of the 2020 Holiday Farm fire that devastated that area. Often these collaborative efforts leverage and attract significant amounts of funding from federal or philanthropic partners, bringing Oregon a great return on its investments. For example, a current Oregon Solutions effort to relocate the rest area in the Mt. Hood Area on Highway 26 received over \$700,000 in USFS grant funding.

Oregon Solutions and Oregon Consensus programs provide unique and valuable services in implementing sustainable solutions and cost-effective resolutions to contentious issues across the state. **I urge you to restore their funding to the full continuing service level recommended in the Governor's budget to assure they have the capacity needed to serve our communities.** Please give their request full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



Karmen Fore
Chief of Staff
Congresswoman Val Hoyle

C: Senator Michael Dembrow
Senator Suzanne Weber
Representative Tracy Cramer
Representative Emily McIntire
Representative Hoa Nguyen
Representative Ricki Ruiz