

Submitter: Karen Matthews
On Behalf Of: City of Wheeler
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Capital Construction
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5531

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Nosse and Members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction,

My town is a diamond in the rough; A million dollar view that we are eager to share with travelers. But right now, the town is dying and we need your help.

It is time to Recycle and Reuse the Rail Road for Trails and a more gently connection to Nature.

The little town of Wheeler was built on access to commerce and tourism via the railroad. Timber, salmon, and tourists were all transported in the early 1900's to create a robust coastal town. The first two resources are a thing of the past. We are dependent on tourism to support our town. The Salmonberry Trail will provide that much needed boost to the economy. Help us make this as successful as its predecessors; Astoria Riverwalk, Banks/Vernonia Trail, and Springwater trail to name a few. We have a huge level of support from our communities and hope the State sees the economic and health values of this project.

I'm writing to express my strong support for state investment in the Salmonberry Trail. This project represents an exciting opportunity to create an 82-mile, safe, and accessible trail connecting the Oregon Coast and the Willamette Valley.

The Salmonberry Trail will bring a range of benefits to Oregonians—boosting local economies through increased tourism, promoting public health through active recreation, and improving transportation safety for those who currently lack safe alternatives to busy highways. It also creates equitable access to the outdoors, especially for rural communities that have historically seen less investment in recreational infrastructure.

As the state considers funding priorities, I urge you to include the Salmonberry Trail. This is a smart, future-focused investment that will serve Oregon for generations to come.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Karen Matthews
City of Wheeler Council President