

November 10, 2016

[Name]

[Address]

[City, State, ZIP]

Dear _____,

We are writing in support of Levee Ready Columbia's efforts to ensure the long-term resilience of the Portland-area levee system. In your deliberations on the federal budget for Fiscal Year 2017, we ask you to prioritize securing a New Start Feasibility Study for the Portland Metropolitan Levee System. This project is critically important to our constituents in Multnomah County, the Portland metropolitan area, and all of Oregon and Southwest Washington.

The Portland Metropolitan Levee System Project, proposed by Levee Ready Columbia, includes 27 miles of levees along the Columbia River between the Sandy and Willamette Rivers. The protected floodplain includes a vibrant and economically vital industrial zone with \$16 billion in annual economic activity and \$5.5 billion in property value. It is home to 10 percent of all the jobs in Multnomah County, including 50 percent of the region's manufacturing and warehouse jobs, as well as multiple critical infrastructure assets.

These levees reduce flood risks for the Portland International Airport (PDX), which serves over 15 million passengers per year, including 90 percent of all air cargo in the state. The Air National Guard's 142nd Fighter Wing is based nearby. The levees protect two major railroads, three interstate highways, and two light-rail transit lines. The protected floodplain also includes the City of Portland's South Shore Well Field (Oregon's second-largest source of drinking water), which serves as a back-up water supply for 800,000 Portland-area residents. If these facilities were compromised in a flood, the resulting disruption could cripple the state and the Northwest region.

No less importantly, the levee system protects neighborhoods with 7,500 residents and valued community assets. The floodplain has 17 miles of multi-use paths, 15 miles of water trails, and 2,000 acres of parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities.

The levee system is operated and maintained in compliance with federal standards. It performed as designed when tested by a 100-year high-water event in 1996. However, as the system continues to age, Levee Ready Columbia is conducting engineering studies to assess the condition of the levees and determine where upgrades may be needed.

We believe a federal partnership will be crucial as our community moves to the next phase of our effort to keep this infrastructure functional and resilient for the coming decades. A recent Section 216 report by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers found that further investigation of this levee system is in the federal interest.

Maintaining and investing in flood risk reduction is a national need and we hope you will continue to make it a focus of your service in Congress. Levee Ready Columbia's proactive and collaborative approach shows that it is possible to address these challenges before a crisis strikes. This project can offer a successful model that other jurisdictions around the country can learn from and emulate.

As Congress finalizes the FY17 Energy & Water Appropriations bill, we urge you to keep in mind the value of the Portland Metropolitan Levee System Project to Multnomah County and the Northwest. Please do all you can to ensure that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers selects this project for a New Start Feasibility Study in its FY17 work plan.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate to advance the best interests of our constituents and all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Deborah Kafoury
Multnomah County Chair

Jules Bailey
Commissioner, District 1

Loretta Smith
Commissioner, District 2

Judy Shiprack
Commissioner, District 3

Diane McKeel
Commissioner, District 4

CC: [Names of the other seven Members of Congress]