



MULTNOMAH COUNTY AGENDA PLACEMENT REQUEST

(Revised: 1/11/2016)

Board Clerk Use Only

Meeting Date: 11/10/16

Agenda Item #: C.11

Est. Start Time: 9:30 am

Date Submitted: 11/2/16

Agenda Title: Letter to Members of Congress in support of Levee Ready Columbia's pursuit of a federal feasibility study

Note: Title should not be more than 2 lines but be sufficient to describe the action requested.

Requested Meeting Date: November 10, 2016

Time Needed: Consent agenda

Department: Non-departmental

Division: District 1

Contact(s): Henry Burton, Policy Director

Phone: 503-988-5882 **Ext.** **I/O Address:**

Presenter Name(s) & Title(s): Consent agenda

General Information

1. What are you requesting from the Board?

Approval of letters to eight Members of Congress in support of Levee Ready Columbia's efforts to ensure the long-term resilience of the Portland-area levee system. The letter urges the Congressional delegation to support funding for a proposed federal feasibility study, known as the Portland Metropolitan Levee System Project. The letter will go to:

Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Jeff Merkley
Congressman Peter DeFazio
Congressman Earl Blumenauer
Congressman Greg Walden
Congressman Kurt Schrader
Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler
Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici

The text of the letter is the same in each case.

2. Please provide sufficient background information for the Board and the public to understand this issue. Please note which Program Offer(s) this action affects and how it impacts the results.

The Portland area has a 45-mile levee system that runs from the Sandy River to the Willamette River and wraps around Sauvie Island. The Lower Columbia River has seen three 100-year and two 500-year high-water events since 1894. Most recently, we had a 100-year event in 1996.

Levee Ready Columbia is a partnership of over 25 public, private, and non-profit stakeholders who are working to reduce flood risks along the Columbia River by maintaining the Portland area's levee infrastructure. The project is investigating the condition of the levees and identifying where improvements are needed, in order to ensure continued federal accreditation of this levee system.

Levee Ready Columbia is funded by contributions from the partner organizations, including the State of Oregon, Metro, the Port, Multnomah County, Portland, Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview, and the five drainage districts.

Levee Ready Columbia is pursuing a New Start Feasibility Study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which would open the door to greater federal investment in improvements to the levee system. This would be a three-year study, with a maximum cost of \$3 million, of which, the federal government would pay half and local partners would pay half. The proposed study—known as the Portland Metropolitan Levee System Project—would assess the appropriate level of flood risk reduction along the Columbia Corridor and determine whether there is a national interest in strengthening this levee system.

Levee Ready Columbia has proposed the Portland Metropolitan Levee System Project after three years of planning and study. This proposal is the product of a collaborative, inclusive, and transparent process. Levee Ready Columbia has worked with the Portland district office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop the scope of the proposed project and has submitted documents to justify the project. Levee Ready Columbia has also sent its own letter (with support from all the partners) to the Congressional delegation to request their support.

3. Explain the fiscal impact (current year and ongoing).

There is no immediate fiscal impact from this letter. If the Army Corps of Engineers selects this project, Levee Ready Columbia will need to provide a local cost-share of 50%. However, it is likely that much of the local contribution would be provided in-kind, by sharing the results of engineering studies that Levee Ready Columbia is already undertaking. In the event that a cash contribution is required for the local cost-share, the cost would be divided among the several partners in Levee Ready Columbia. Multnomah County's share is currently less than 1% of Levee Ready Columbia's budget.

4. Explain any legal and/or policy issues involved.

This letter pertains to a federal policy decision. The goals are to persuade Congress to provide funding to the US Army Corps of Engineers for this type of study and then to persuade the Army Corps to select the Portland Metropolitan Levee System Project for funding in FY 2017.

5. Explain any citizen and/or other government participation that has or will take place.

Levee Ready Columbia has an active and energetic campaign of community outreach. Project employees have had tables at numerous street fairs and community picnics, where they show a large-scale map of the levee system and talk to residents about the region's history of flood events and the regional importance of the levee system. The project has had a presence at 14 public events since May, resulting in direct conversations with about 1,000 people and visibility to thousands more.

Required Signature

Elected Official or

Department/ Megan Beyer /s/

11/2/16

Agency Director: _____

Date: _____

Note: Please submit electronically. Insert names of your approvers followed by /s/ - we no longer use actual signatures. Please insert date approved for submittal.