

From: Mark Kujala
To: [JWMTR Exhibits](#)
Subject: Written Testimony in favor of HB 5025
Date: Wednesday, March 08, 2017 2:59:47 PM

To: Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means SubCommittee On Transportation and Economic Development

Attn: Co-Chairs Senator Betsy Johnson and Representative David Gomberg

From: Mark Kujala, Mayor, City of Warrenton

March 9, 2017

RE: In Support of HB 5025

My Name is Mark Kujala and I am Mayor of the City of Warrenton

Warrenton has truly benefited from the Regional Solutions program, whether it's the coordination of a dredging project on the Skipanon River or assistance in re-locating Pacific Seafoods back to Warrenton, Warrenton appreciates the mission and the accessibility of the North Coast Regional Solutions Team and Coordinator Mark Ellsworth. Along with Ellsworth are Dennie Houle and Melanie Olson from Business Oregon, Jennifer Purcell from DEQ, Patrick Wingard from DLCD, Mary McArthur from COL PAC, Jae Pudewell from ODOT and Kim Travis from Housing and Community Services. Having the Regional Solutions team directly informed and brainstorming on major economic development projects or infrastructure issues specific to our corner of the state is truly invaluable. They do what their name implies: they find solutions.

In mid-December last year the National Governor's Association asked the nations' governors to submit a list of infrastructure priorities at the request of then President-Elect Trump's transition team. Governor Kate Brown identified "money for major levee improvements" as one of five priorities for the State of Oregon. I am gratified that Governor Brown's proposed budget for the Oregon Business Development Department includes 11,000,000 for regional solutions and 10,000,000 for levee improvements through IFA.

Warrenton is currently working with Regional Solutions to secure funding assistance for the geotechnical work needed for our levees. We have 10 miles of levees that need to get certified and accredited. In order to do that we must demonstrate to the Corps and FEMA that the levee is constructed out of the right material, that it's adequately compacted and that there is not significant seepage under the levee. So every 1000 feet or so you need to extract a core sample and analyze it for things like organics and moisture content.

This work is highly specialized and will be contracted out to a geotechnical consultant with the proper expertise and equipment. You can naturally assume that this work is also very expensive, estimated around 1 million dollars for our system. So Warrenton is applying for IFA loans through Regional Solution in order to help subsidize the cost of some of this work.

In the meantime our city engineer, Collin Stelzig is working with utility and property owners to properly manage or remove encroachments; power poles, garages, fences, docks etc; that have intruded into to the levee. Warrenton was fortunate to be able to use the Oregon National Guard to help rehab a section of levee that had settled and were able bring the levee back up to its original elevation. We are coordinating with Clatsop County Diking District #11, which is located outside the city but is nonetheless part of our flood protection system, and are currently working to annex their section of levee into City of Warrenton jurisdiction so we can bring them up to accredited status along with the rest of the system. We are also working with ODOT to address Highway 101-Business which is actually a low spot in our levee system.

Section 5 of HB 5025 establishes the “non limited” authority for expenditures from the Special Public Works Fund. There is a lot of work to do that is complicated and expensive. Warrenton has 5300 residents and 3300 jobs representing the largest percentage of employment in Clatsop County. We have the largest industrial area in Clatsop County and we are integral to air transportation and commercial economies. Regional assets such as the Astoria Airport, US Coast Guard Base, Lektro, City Hall, our first responders and public works facilities, a grade school and high school campus, all of these are within a flood-protected area.

I think that \$11,000,000 for regional solutions and \$10,000,000 for the Special Public Works Fund is only a start, but I understand the economic climate we are in and the difficult decisions you have to make. We expect the Regional Solutions program and Business Oregon to be significant partners with Warrenton in our levee accreditation effort in the years to come.

I strongly urge your support for HB 5025. Thanks so much for your time.

Mark Kujala
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