

Congress of the United States

December 8, 2021

The Honorable Michael Connor
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
U.S. Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Secretary Connor and Director Young:

Ports and harbors are crucial economic drivers in communities throughout Oregon State. As the work plan for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA) is developed, we urge you to allocate funding to port and harbor project priorities in the State of Oregon to ensure our federally authorized waterways and navigation infrastructure is properly maintained.

Oregon is home to significant export gateways, inland barging terminals, and smaller commercial and recreational fishing ports. Altogether, Oregon's 23 public ports are a key component in sustaining Oregon's economy and quality of life, including in our State's most rural areas. Oregon's ports support tens of thousands of family-wage jobs that are directly or indirectly tied to cargo movement, as well as recreation, industrial, commercial, and other activities that contribute billions of dollars in wages to Oregon's economy, in addition to supporting the activities of Federal agencies.

The passage of the IIJA represents an investment of approximately \$17 billion through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for navigation and waterway infrastructure. This includes significant funding for construction, studies, and operations and maintenance. While some federal navigation projects in Oregon received funding in the Administration's proposed FY2022 and the draft House and Senate FY2022 Appropriations bills, significant maintenance and rehabilitation needs remain.

For the Construction General (CG) account, we are seeking additional resources including:

- \$37.525 million – Federal Columbia River Power System for Columbia River Fish Mitigation on the Columbia River and in the Willamette Valley. This account previously received much more funding on an annual basis and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission has priorities to potentially explore above and beyond what is currently identified.
- \$1 million – Columbia River Channel Improvements for preparation of a new dredge material disposal site.
- \$300,000 – John Day Lock & Dam Mitigation to develop design plans and specifications for a new fish acclimation and release facility.

- \$7.25 million - Willamette Falls Locks repair and transfer.

In the General Investigations (GI) account, we seek funding for the following:

- \$732,000 – Willamette River, Oregon to initiate pre-construction, engineering and design for environmental dredging needs.
- \$200,000 – Columbia River Turning Basin Navigation Improvements Feasibility Study.
- \$200,000 – New start study for the aquatic ecosystem restoration at Nursery Reach in Milton-Freewater, Oregon.
- \$90,000 – New start study for the 42nd Street Levee project in Springfield, Oregon.

For the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) account, we are seeking funding for the following projects:

- \$36.561 million – Columbia River at the Mouth (MCR) to complete additional dredging, secure a pump ashore dredging contract, and repair the pile system.
- \$51.807 million – Columbia & Lower Willamette below Vancouver & Portland (C&LW), OR/WA for additional dredging, pile dike repairs, ensure safe ferry operations, maintain U.S. Coast Guard designated anchorages, and promote economic development for several rural communities and marine industries.
- \$32.720 million – Coos Bay, OR for the North Jetty root and trunk major maintenance construction and monitoring need. The Fiscal Year 2022 Energy and Water Appropriations bill in both the House and Senate include funding for the Coos Bay North Jetty project, in addition to funding already appropriated for Fiscal Year 2021. We urge you to ensure adequate funds are immediately made available for the Corps to accept an existing bid for this project and for the Corps to immediately begin construction of this critical project.
- \$11.629 million – Coos Bay, OR for a clamshell contract to dredge RM 12-15 to accommodate current and future barge and deep draft vessel traffic.
- \$62 million – Tillamook Bay and Bar South Jetty head and trunk repairs to support the Port of Garibaldi and prevent additional loss of life events.
- \$1.120 million – Skipanon Channel dredging which supports the Port of Astoria, OR.
- \$2.025 million – Yaquina River dredging, project condition survey, and real estate work to support the Port of Toledo, OR.

For the inland navigation system, every lock and dam on the Columbia River has additional maintenance needs; some of which have been deferred for many years. Therefore, we are also seeking O & M funding for the following projects:

- \$16.425 million – McNary Lock & Dam for a second Derrick Crane, downstream gate gudgeon anchor replacement, levee drainage pump stations, and 3rd Street road construction.

- \$2.191 million – The Dalles Lock & Dam for navigation lock miter gate repair follow up and tainter valves plans and specifications, Major Rehabilitation Report, and environmental permitting work.
- \$4.487 million – John Day Lock & Dam for a navigation lock bearing shoe, tainter valve plans and specifications, a ship to shore crane, and environmental permitting work.
- \$3.945 million – Bonneville Lock & Dam for plans and specifications for navigation lock stoplogs, navigation lock bridge design, spillway crane replacement, and stilling basin rock removal and mitigation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit rural communities and small, commercial ports with multiple economic losses from higher safety and sanitation costs, shelter in place orders, tenants seeking lease deferral, a severe downturn of the commercial fishing markets, and ports were not eligible to receive much of the relief funds. These ports are a source of jobs, recreation, and tax benefit to the state and local community and additional operations and maintenance funding is critical for the federal channels and structures that serve these communities.

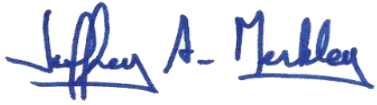
There are serious concerns about the significant recession of the Coos Bay North Jetty and potential to impede search and rescue missions of the U.S. Coast Guard. The Tillamook South Jetty deterioration also creates similar navigation hazards for commercial shipping, commercial and sports fishing, and recreational boating. Looking ahead to future years, the Coquille River jetty infrastructure will also need to be addressed. We appreciate the work being done by the Portland District to prepare the design report and complete the environmental documents. These jetties were intended to protect Federal investment in channels and harbors. The current condition of these jetties represent a real and significant public safety concern that must be addressed – we have seen firsthand how a lack of funding for these projects puts mariners in harm's way and impedes the U.S. Coast Guard's ability to carry out search and rescue missions.

The jetties at the Mouth of the Columbia River are currently being rehabilitated and received strong support from the Administration for the \$25.6 million needed to complete construction of this project. A pile dike system is meant to work in tandem with these jetties to control the river and sediment flows. These pile dikes are over 100 years old, and need maintenance in order for the system to function as designed and protect the Federal navigation investments from the mouth of the river all the way to Idaho.

Finally, after two years without adequate dredging at the mouth of the Rogue River, the Port of Gold Beach faces serious safety concerns, significant economic distress in an already difficult economic environment, and troubling limitations on the capabilities of the Coast Guard, who will not be able to bring their vessels into the marina this year due to inadequate depth. This project is long overdue and has been consistently neglected. The Corps District has claimed sufficient funds to complete this project. We urge expeditious completion of the dredging and basin work.

As our nation looks to stimulate economic development and increase job growth, these projects will assist in maintaining our navigation and trade assets which keep critical supply chains and goods moving. Thank you for your consideration of our requests.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress