

## **What Stakeholders in Southern Oregon Are Saying About the Legislation:**

“Talent Irrigation District would like to give our sincere thanks to Senators Merkley, Wyden and their staff for working diligently to have our Billings Siphon and Eastside Canal Project included in the bill,” **said Mike Winters, President of the Board of Directors.** “The project will replace aging infrastructure and the piping of the open canal will have a profound water savings due to reducing evaporation and leakage. This will be able to provide more water to our district patrons and provide water savings that will be directed toward enhancing streamflows in Bear Creek and ultimately the Rogue River.”

“We are honored to have our allied health training facility project included in this bill’s strategic investments helping Oregonians build economic resiliency and healthier communities,” **said Rogue Community College President Randy Weber.** “We are very grateful to Senators Merkley and Wyden for prioritizing the education of new healthcare workers in our region through these building renovation funds. Future graduates from the allied health programs will be vital to our existing economic development efforts and the growing need for trained healthcare workers. Families, healthcare organizations and businesses across Southern Oregon will be strengthened and supported as a result of this commitment.”

“As a publicly owned, working research forest, the Elliott State Research Forest will contribute to conservation, recreation, education, and economic opportunity. I’d like to thank Sen. Jeff Merkley, Sen. Ron Wyden, and Rep. Peter DeFazio for their work to secure this investment to help repurpose the Shutter Creek facility as the research forest’s potential new headquarters. This represents collaboration at its finest, with local, state, tribal, and federal governments working together to secure investment and create jobs in rural Oregon,” **said Governor Brown.**

“This Interior Appropriations bill provides many important investments for forest research,” **said Dr. Tom DeLuca, Dean of the College of Forestry at Oregon State University.** “OSU is particularly appreciative of the efforts of Senators Merkley and Wyden to secure funding for OSU to purchase and install forest monitoring equipment that supports the startup of the Elliott State Research Forest. The Elliott State Research Forest has been established by the State of Oregon to serve as an enduring, publicly owned, world class research forest to advance understanding related to forest health, climate resilience, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, water quality and quantity, and forest recreation.”

This bill represents a critical investment in Coos County and its economic future. Senator Wyden and Senator Merkley understand that rural Oregon needs facilities like the Shutter Creek rehabilitation project to keep our rural community economically viable to offer our children opportunities for a bright future. Investments such as this allow us to diversify our economy and make our communities resilient,” **said Coos County Commissioner, Melissa Cribbins.**

“Oregon now has the second highest rate of youth and adult substance abuse in the country with average monthly unintentional drug overdose deaths doubling from 2019 to 2021. This bill will assist us with the important project of establishing southwest Oregon’s first regional recovery campus to address this urgent healthcare need.” **said Dr. Gregory Brigham, CEO of Adapt Integrated Health Care.** “We are very grateful to Senators Merkley and Wyden for prioritizing the expansion of primary care and behavioral health services offered in rural Oregon. This project will help to alleviate long waitlists for overburdened residential care facilities and improve access to supportive housing for adults, adolescents, and families. From detoxification and stabilization to supportive recovery housing and vocational support, we see this as a major step forward in providing valuable care to our communities.”

“The City of Grants Pass is particularly grateful to Senators Merkley and Wyden for putting our Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project forward on this bill. The Water Treatment Plant Relocation project builds resilience from flood and seismic events, ensuring the residents and businesses of our community are not without a fundamental life source: water. The funding will help mitigate recent service fee increases that have the greatest impact on the those in our community with the fewest financial resources. The funding from this bill will explicitly go to design and construction preparation activities including much needed geotechnical borings, pipeline route work and other design related tasks needed to ensure the success of the project,” **said Jason Canady, Public Works Director, City of Grants Pass.**

“For nearly 5 decades we have seen the numbers of our vital Salmon and Steelhead releases drop almost every year from our Cole Rivers Fish Hatchery at Lost Creek Reservoir. The work Oregon’s two U.S. Senators Wyden and Merkley are doing to improve these counts are nothing short of monumental and many of us believe those efforts are just in time. For me, as one of the Rogue Basin County Public Officials, it has been terrific working with the Senators and their staffs. We thank them and all stakeholders for helping us take big steps forward in saving our vital River Fisheries,” **said Curry County Commissioner Court Boice.**

“Senators Merkley and Wyden have once again shown their leadership by funding programs that protect and restore key habitats for fish and wildlife in Oregon as well as securing vital investments to restore hatchery infrastructure that supports socially, culturally, and economically important fisheries in Southern Oregon. The State very much appreciates the Senators ongoing work and partnership which is helping move the needle for Oregonians,” **said Curt Melcher-Director Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.**

“This bill holds many very important investments that directly support the health and wellbeing of the communities that we work and live in,” **said Linda Maxon, CEO of Coast Community Health Center, a federally qualified health center on the Oregon Coast.** “We are incredibly grateful to Senators Wyden and Merkley for their continued understanding of not only the direct impact on the health of the community but the economic investment in jobs, small businesses, and initiatives that make rural communities viable places to live and work. Without these investments, a significant gap in the quality of life, and our ability to attract professionals

to work in our centers would exist. Our ability to expand will directly enhance capacity to serve more patients, and reduce unnecessary hospitalizations in our region, while saving lives.”

“Funding from this bill will have an enormous impact on improving access to medical care and social services for families impacted by substance use disorders in our community,” **said Dr. Kerri Hecox, founder and Medical Director of the Oasis Center in Medford, Oregon.** “Drug overdose deaths doubled in Jackson County from 2020 to 2021, and the median age of death in 2021 was 40 years old. Many of these deaths left children without parents, perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of trauma. With the funding provided by this bill the Oasis Center will renovate a space to house a recovery resource center including child watch, a specialized medical clinic focusing on addiction, and three attached apartments that will be used as emergency housing for pregnant women struggling with addiction. We are deeply grateful to Senators Merkley and Wyden for recognizing and responding to the crisis of drug addiction in our community.”

“We are grateful to Senators Merkley and Wyden for prioritizing the Public Safety and Resiliency System project and appreciate their efforts to secure this vital funding. Funding from this bill will significantly enhance emergency communication systems and boost resilience with effective emergency response throughout southern Oregon. Ultimately this investment will improve our communication abilities among the City's Fire, Police and Public Works departments as well as regional partners when facing critical emergency events like the Almeda Fire,” **said Eric Thompson, Fire Chief, City of Medford.**

“The entire Southern Oregon University community is grateful for the support of the federal government as we begin our effort to become the nation’s first public university to produce all of its own daytime electricity. We appreciate the support and work of Senators Wyden and Merkley for prioritizing our sustainable energy conversion in this year’s federal spending bill. This allocation will allow us to take a substantial step toward our goal, and it reinforces our institution’s commitment to environmental stewardship, financial prudence and responsible leadership. We look forward to beginning our next round of solar installations to further reduce both our dependence on the electrical grid and the day-to-day costs of powering a 21<sup>st</sup> century campus,” **said SOU President Rick Bailey.**

“Securing this funding will assist our Search and Rescue unit with the appropriate equipment in order to ensure adequate communications and mission planning while they are in the field searching for lost or missing persons. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Senators Merkley and Wyden for their support of this project which will truly help save lives and will make a difference in Douglas County,” **said Douglas County Sheriff John Hanlin.**

"Medford Irrigation District (MID) and stakeholders appreciate Senator Merkley’s and Wyden’s hard work in securing funding for MID's floating solar project. The project will be the first of its kind in Oregon. Floating solar will reduce the evaporation rate on MID's reregulation pond, saving precious water for agriculture, while also providing an opportunity for patrons of the District to buy cheap renewable energy. The dual benefits of this project will help rising energy

costs and recent water loss due to drought conditions,” **said Jack Friend, Manager of Medford Irrigation District.**

“Oregon has the 4th highest alcohol abuse rate and the 3rd highest addiction rate in the country, yet we are 47th in the country for access to care for those suffering. This funding provides important investments in the Transformations Wellness Center to support the healthcare ecosystem in Klamath County. We appreciate the dedication Senators Wyden and Merkley have demonstrated to the needs of our rural Oregon community with this bill. This new funding will allow Transformations Wellness to increase the scope and impact of their services in ways which will benefit our region. KCEDA is proud to be a supporter of Transformations Wellness and looks forward to assisting the organization further as it enters the next stages of its expansion,” **said Randy Cox, CEO of Klamath County Economic Development Association (KCEDA).**

“The inclusion of Kingsley Field’s new Communication Flight building in the Omnibus bill will allow the current building, built in 1956, to be enlarged and upgraded with today’s cyber infrastructure and provide a single communication focal point for the installation. This much needed renovation will enhance the current mission and afford greater opportunities for future missions, ensuring the 173d Fighter Wing’s nearly 40 years of fighter training excellence continues,” **said Colonel Lee Bouma, Commander of 173d Fighter Wing.**

“We are very grateful to Senators Merkley and Wyden for prioritizing the upgrade to our Emergency Communication Radio system in our region through these building renovation funds. Communications supporting our first responders throughout Douglas County is vital to the safety of our communities. Especially given our County’s large geographical footprint, as well as the challenges we have with severe terrain, mountains and valleys, it is imperative that we have a reliable Emergency Communication Radio system that can provide timely coverage to all corners of our county. Fifty-five agencies across Douglas County will benefit as a result of this commitment,” **said Commissioner Tom Kress, Douglas County.**

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