



June 28, 2017

District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Portland District
Attn: CENWP-PM-E/Kelly Janes
PO Box 2496
Portland, OR 97208-2946

Re: Willamette Falls Locks Final Disposition Study CENWP-PM-E-17-01

The City of Oregon City, City Commission is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Preliminary Draft Disposition Study for the Willamette Falls Locks. We understand that this process is a pilot program to establish policy for the disposal of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) assets that are no longer essential to the mission of the USACE. We also understand that this is the formal USACE process to explore the prospect of transferring the facility to a non-USACE owner and operator and, in the event a transfer is not possible, to begin the permanent deauthorization, decommissioning and closure process.

The City of Oregon City believes the Locks should be repaired and reopened, allowing the Willamette River to remain one river for navigation purposes from its headwaters south of Eugene to its mouth in Portland. The river offers a wide variety of economic and cultural benefits for our community and the entire state of Oregon. We have active businesses that utilize the river as well as residents and visitors. The Willamette River is a critical part of our community's identity and any actions that strengthen the river for the long-term are important to us.

Oregon City supports the efforts of the Willamette Locks Working Group, which is pursuing local due diligence to identify a transferee, define the process for assuming responsibility and taking over operations of the Locks, and establishing funding mechanisms for on-going operations, maintenance, and future capital needs. This is a complicated process with many stakeholders, but all parties are working well together and we remain hopeful it will lead to success.

The USACE's Preliminary Draft Disposition Study recommends the alternative "Transfer to Identified Transferee – a Non Operational Lock." We are pleased that transferring the Locks is the chosen alternative, however we request that the USACE allow time for adequate due diligence. To ensure the transfer process can actually take place we urge USACE to carry out urgently needed safety repairs and environmental assessments, and document the costs of repairs needed to return the Locks to operational status.

The City of Oregon City appreciates the long standing partnership with USACE that has supported the Willamette River's central role to our city, to the region and to the entire state of Oregon for over 100 years. The river has connected communities for far longer than that and we believe the Locks are far too important to simply block forever with concrete. We look forward to continuing to partner with USACE in the future as we work together to find solutions that meet Federal needs while accomplishing local community goals. Thank you for your work on this project and for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Oregon City, City Commission