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Written Testimony of Congressman Kurt Schrader
House Transportation & Infrastructure Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee
Proposals for a Water Resources Development Act of 2020: Members' Day Hearing

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and the rest of the Transportation and Infrastructure committee members for hosting this opportunity. The success that WRDA has had during these divided times is a testament to the committee's willingness to work across the aisle and I hope that work will be just as successful for WRDA 2020.

My number one priority here is to advocate for the reconstruction of the South Jetty into Tillamook Bay. The north and south jetties started construction in 1913 and have grown over the decades to fight against the crushing impact of the Pacific Ocean. In 2010, the Army Corps rehabilitated the North Jetty to its current length of 5,213 feet. During this work they made key repairs and added to the structure so that it could survive the onslaught of the waves.

However, the South Jetty was not included in that rehabilitation and over the past ten years has eroded considerably. Its current state poses an extreme danger. This failure has severely impacted my communities and puts folks in danger as they try to enter and exit the bay. The Coast Guard and the Army Corps Portland district both recognize this fact. I hear it every time I meet with them about how the jetty is impacting their work.

And it's just going to cost us more money in the long run if we don't fix it now. Because the failure of the South Jetty will severely impact the lifespan of the North Jetty. And if the jetty system isn't working properly, then we'll need more dredging due to increased sediment in the bay. In the interests of safety for my constituents and for saving Uncle Sam money, I ask that the committee works with me on ways to get this project done before anyone else is hurt.

Another important project in my district and one that the committee's staff has been helpful on is the disposition of the Willamette Falls Locks. These locks have been operating since the early 1870s but were closed back in 2011 due to lack of proper maintenance and investment. However, they are still owned by the Corps and WRDA 2020 will be the vehicle to transfer that property.

Currently, a wide range of stake holders in Oregon are working to establish a way to reopen the locks. The Willamette Falls Locks Commission is recommending a state appropriation of \$14.043

million of lottery revenue bonds in the 2020 legislative session to repair and reopen the locks. The WLFC also has legislation that proposes establishing a public corporation, the Willamette Falls Locks Authority, as the new owner/operator to manage the operations and maintenance of the locks following their transfer from the Corps. Several cities along with Metro, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Yamhill and Marion Counties, and other entities are committing funding for phase one, which is expected to begin in 2020 and lasts until the Locks are open, expected in 2024. It is estimated to cost around \$350,000 in annual expenses for phase one.

I want to thank my folks back home who have led the way on this project, Army Corps Portland district staff, and T&I Committee staff for all their work to make this a reality. I am hopeful that the federal government can do its part to keep this moving forward.

My last request for the committee is a project that has been developing over the past few months but could rapidly worsen. The City of Newport is currently seeking \$70 to \$80 million dollars to replace Big Creek Dam, which holds their municipal water supply. The current dams were originally built in 1958, and over time have deteriorated to the point where they are vulnerable to complete failure in the event of an earthquake registering at 3.5 or higher. Should these dams fail, the flows would breach Highway 101 and roughly 20 houses would be destroyed without warning. The region is also prone to slides every year that could also wipe out the dam. The city is currently investigating multiple money sources, including state funding, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) High Hazard Potential Dam Grant Program, but the full cost is too great to be borne solely by a local bond. Your staff have been very helpful in finding federal solutions to this problem and I hope that will continue during this process.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify about my priorities for Oregon's fifth district. And thank you again to your committee staff for working with my office on these issues. I look forward to seeing the committee's final product.