



December 17, 2014

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary Darcy,

The water stored in the 13 federal reservoirs in the Willamette River Basin is critical to meeting the future needs for irrigation, drinking water supply, industrial uses, and environmental restoration. Unfortunately, the current allocation of costs and storage space does not encompass all of the authorized uses of the Project, therefore a comprehensive reallocation study must be completed to plan for and implement the use of this water for multiple benefits. The Willamette Basin Reservoir Study will authorize the reallocation of this stored water allowing the Willamette Project to serve as a primary factor for economic development in Oregon's most populated river basin.

Recognizing the importance of this resource in the 1990's, the State of Oregon and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) began working cooperatively to develop a sensible and deliberate water resources plan. Under the Willamette Basin Reservoir Study, the state and federal government worked together with a broad range of stakeholders to evaluate the allocation of stored water for current and future water resources needs. The study was delayed in 2000 following the listing of Willamette River salmon and steelhead populations under the Endangered Species Act. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) completed the Biological Opinion for the Project in 2008, and the Reservoir Study was reinitiated in 2013 with a commitment of federal, state, and local funds.

Recent efforts have focused primarily on a small-scale reallocation study for access to 437 acre-feet of stored water for municipal and industrial use. This effort has resulted in the completion of a Surplus Water Letter Report. Completion of this study is a milestone for USACE and basin stakeholders; however, significant additional effort is needed to complete a successful reallocation of the remaining stored water in the Willamette Project. The Reservoir Study will continue to require resources from both federal and non-federal sources.

In Oregon's 2013 legislative session, basin stakeholders worked diligently to pass legislation to provide a funding source to meet the 50 percent cost share for the completion of the full reallocation study over the next few federal fiscal years. In 2014, the Legislative Assembly directed the Oregon Water Resources Department to set-aside \$1.5 million of the \$10 million Water Resources Development Fund for the purposes of matching federal funds to allocate stored water in the Willamette Basin Project Reservoirs. Passage of this legislation (SB 839) and this budget note represents a collaborative effort between multiple stakeholder interests to ensure availability of the required local match and demonstrates Oregon's commitment to finalizing the larger reallocation of the Willamette Project. Local stakeholders strongly support continued federal funding for this project in the FY 16 budget.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and please don't hesitate to contact Niki Iverson, serving as Project Manager for the Oregon Water Utilities Council at 503-615-6770 or niki.iverson@hillsboro-oregon.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Niki Iverson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Niki Iverson
Oregon Water Utilities Council

Association of Oregon Counties
League of Oregon Cities
Oregon Association of Nurseries
American Water Works Association - Pacific Northwest Section
Special Districts Association of Oregon
Oregon Environmental Council
Oregon Water Resources Congress
The Nature Conservancy
City of Wilsonville
City of Hillsboro