

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2018

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable R.D. James  
Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Director Mulvaney and Assistant Secretary James,

As you finalize the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) Work Plan for the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), we request your support for the Portland Metropolitan Flood Protection Project General Investigations Feasibility Study in Portland, Oregon. The Corps has recognized a substantial increase in the system's risk profile and potential consequences from a major flood event making further investigation of the existing system an urgent need. We urge you to include this project as one of the limited number of new start feasibility studies in the FY18 Work Plan.

In 1948, the area now protected by the Corps-designed and built 27-mile levee system was the site of a catastrophic levee breach which resulted in 15 deaths and permanently displaced the entire Vanport community. Now, an impressive coalition in the nearby community is actively working to ensure that risks are minimized and that history does not repeat itself along the second biggest river in the nation.

The levee system is the first line of defense protecting vital local, regional and national infrastructure assets such as the Portland International Airport, the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard, three major interstates representing a critical trade corridor along the west coast, two freight railroads, a deep-water ship channel for the Port of Portland, and the Columbia South Shore Well Field which is Oregon's second largest source of drinking water supplying water to 966,600 people and a major gas pipeline that serves two states. Since the Vanport flood this system has performed well, however the levees are showing significant signs of structural vulnerabilities during recent high water events including sloughing, boils and seepage.

In addition, this area must be prepared for any flood management changes that result from the Columbia River Treaty negotiations. The current treaty expires in 2024 and the potential impacts to Columbia River hydraulics and hydrology is a major concern.

As the non-federal sponsor, the Multnomah County Drainage District's (MCDD) sound maintenance of the levee system has reduced flood risks to the Portland community for over 60-

years. MCDD has operated and maintained the system to current standards in coordination with the Corps; however as federal standards change, it is imperative that the Corps move forward with a new feasibility study.

Levee Ready Columbia, part of the Governor's Oregon Solutions Program, has brought together a diverse set of stakeholders including local, state and federal entities, environmental organizations, businesses and residents alike, in support of this project to study the levees and reduce flood risk along the Columbia River. In preparation for a new start feasibility designation, the non-federal sponsor has all of the necessary agreements and the local cost-share in place. We believe that you will find that Levee Ready Columbia has garnered the community support and the technical and financial wherewithal to partner with the Corps on a new start feasibility study.

Again, we urge your support of the Portland Metropolitan Flood Protection Project General Investigations Feasibility Study. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
U.S. Senator



Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



Jeffery A. Merkley  
U.S. Senator



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress