



Clatsop County

Board of Commissioners

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February 16, 2024

The Honorable Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Senators Wyden and Merkley,

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners request your consideration of the following projects for Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) appropriations. These local initiatives will support public health and safety, enhance quality of life and livability; and encourage economic vitality and opportunity for our residents.

Westport Ferry Access Road – Clatsop County is requesting funding for construction of a new collector roadway to facilitate private investment in economic development, reduce congestion for both Oregon and Washington Commuters, and improve quality of life for residents in the small, underserved, rural community of Westport. With a population of just 329 residents, Westport is located between Astoria and Clatskanie and experiences disproportionately high heavy truck traffic and congestion along Westport Ferry Road – its primary roadway and school bus route – from US30 (Columbia River Highway). During peak hours, as heavy truck traffic accesses nearby industrial land on the Columbia River and commuters travel between Washington and Oregon by way of the Wahkiakum County Ferry, there are more than three times as many vehicles on Westport Ferry Road than residences. CDS funding will support construction of a new roadway that would provide access to connect US-HWY30 to WA-SR4 via ferry access, while removing heavy hauling truck traffic and interstate vehicle traffic off of a rural residential street.

Affordable and Transitional Housing – Clatsop County is experiencing a housing crisis. One out of 40 individuals in Clatsop County are unhoused and the County has the highest rate of homelessness per 1,000 residents in Oregon. On behalf of its nonprofit partners, Clatsop County is requesting federal funding to support the following transitional and affordable housing projects.

- **Copeland Commons (Astoria)** - Clatsop County is partnering with Copeland Commons to transform a dilapidated, four-story multi-use building into more than 60 affordable housing units for people earning between 30 and 80 percent of the area median income. Copeland Commons, the name of the nonprofit and affordable housing project, has partnered with a developer and has about \$1 million in grant funding from Care Oregon, EPA, Clatsop County, and the contributions of other local community partners.

- **Esperanza Village (Seaside)** - In partnership with Clatsop Community Action, Clatsop County is requesting funding to support the Esperanza Village transitional housing project in the City of Seaside. Esperanza Village will create 15 new units (30 beds) of low barrier micro-shelter housing, along with a community room, two bathroom and shower buildings and 24/7 oversight by caseworkers to help residents' transition into permanent housing.

Public Safety Radio Equipment & 911 Operations – Clatsop County's public safety radio system serves six law enforcement and fourteen fire agencies serving approximately 42,000 fulltime residents with a surge in population during high tourist season of more than 100,000. With the ongoing concerns of an imminent Cascadia Subduction event adequate radio system infrastructure is vital. The current radio infrastructure has reached end of life and needs significant upgrades to meet resiliency and coverage goals. The project would consist of 1) replacing and establishing new microwave backhaul connections between dispatch locations and radiofrequency (RF) sites to improve resilience and connection availability and 2) replacing end of life very high frequency (VHF) analog simulcast over IP (ASIP) radio equipment to reduce radio sites and increase signal propagation.

Courthouse Security Improvements – Clatsop County is requesting funding to address immediate vulnerabilities of Clatsop County's courthouse that threaten the safety and security of its occupants. A 2019 courthouse vulnerability assessment reveal the building's lack of single-point entry with a screening station and its elevator nearing the end of its lifecycle are a substantial threat to public safety. Without a single point of entry, it's impossible for the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office to provide adequate personnel coverage to secure the building at any given time. The County has identified matching funds, completed schematic design, and is ready to begin construction on the existing facility.

We respectfully ask for your assistance with these initiatives and the significant benefits they will bring to our communities across the County. Thank you for your consideration and your steadfast support for Clatsop County.

Sincerely,



Mark Kujala, Chair
Clatsop County Board of Commissioners