

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2013

Mayor Doug Neeley
City of Oregon City
625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045

Dear Mayor Neeley:

As Oregon City prepares to initiate the master planning process for the former Blue Heron paper mill site overlooking Willamette Falls, we write to encourage you to take every opportunity to fully utilize this unique asset. For generations, the Willamette Falls area has been a place where cultural, commercial and recreational activities converged, and it now has the potential to once again become a major destination for residents and visitors alike.

Redevelopment of the former Blue Heron site through private retail and commercial development could bring new employment and revitalized economic activity throughout the region. It could also restore convenient public access to Willamette Falls for the first time in 150 years, allowing visitors to observe and enjoy this national treasure for generations to come. Tribal history, western settlement and industrial development could all be potential elements of a compelling story centered around the Falls. This unique combination of factors could help to create a regional destination which could generate jobs from construction, tourism and by enhancing nearby property values.

We applaud the recent progress and ongoing commitment of the many stakeholders working to redevelop the property. They should all be commended for their efforts to engage the public in the planning process and move toward a shared vision of the Willamette Falls site. Their work highlights the spirit of collaboration and excitement exemplified by this project.

We strongly support continued efforts to prepare the site for future redevelopment, including preparation for the significant clean-up activities that will be necessary. Creating a common vision for Willamette Falls and turning that vision into reality will require continued strong partnerships among stakeholders at every level—local, county, regional, state, tribal, and federal. We look forward to working with you to take advantage of this singular opportunity for Oregon.

Sincerely,



KURT SCHRADER
Member of Congress



RON WYDEN
U.S. Senator



JEFFREY A. MERKLEY
U.S. Senator