



April 14, 2021

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Co-Chair Betsy Johnson
Co-Chair Elizabeth Steiner Hayward
Co-Chair Dan Rayfield

Re: Support for SB 5534 Lottery Bond Sales for Wallowa Lake Dam Rehabilitation Project

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield:

The Wallowa Lake Irrigation District, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation collectively write to you today requesting your support for Senate Bill (SB) 5534 and its funding for the Wallowa Lake Dam Rehabilitation project.

As you know, the Wallowa Dam project was to be funded through the sale of lottery bonds pursuant to House Bill 5030 (2019). Unfortunately, the sale of these bonds was suspended after the sobering June 2020 economic forecast from the Department of Administrative Services.

While we recognize that Oregon still faces difficult times ahead, we are heartened by the inclusion of the Wallowa Dam project in SB 5534. We believe that this project is precisely the type of public investment that will help prepare Oregon to navigate the environmental and economic challenges that lie before us.

Investing in the aging infrastructure of Wallowa Lake Dam will provide economic, social, and ecological benefits for decades to come as the region and state deal with intensified drought and precipitation events. A rehabilitated Wallowa Lake Dam will restore reservoir capacity for the irrigated agricultural community, protect downstream communities from the threat of catastrophic flooding, and enhance both reservoir and in-stream fisheries and recreation benefits.

As we seek to prepare for a changing climate, proactive public investment in water storage and infrastructure projects like Wallowa Lake Dam will help provide our communities and region the improved security we need to adapt and flourish.

We stand together behind this project, as demonstrated in the enclosed memorandum of agreement, to which we are all signatories. We thank you for your on-going support of our work, and ask for the passage of SB 5534 and its funding for the Wallowa Lake Dam project.

Respectfully,

Dan Butterfield

Dan Butterfield
President
Wallowa Lake Irrigation
District

Casey F. Wheeler
FWS

Shannon F. Wheeler
Chairman
Nez Perce Tribe

N. Kathryn Brigham

N. Kathryn Brigham
Board of Trustees Chair
Confederated Tribes of the
Umatilla Indian Reservation

Encl: Wallowa MOA
(amended)

cc: Sen. Bill Hansell
Rep. Bobby Levy