



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Transportation Commission

Office of the Director, MS 11

355 Capitol St NE

Salem, OR 97301-3871

April 29, 2016

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) is pleased to offer its support of the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) application for TIGER 2016 funding for the Historic Columbia River Highway: Viento State Park to Perham Creek project. Each year there are a number of TIGER eligible projects in Oregon that ODOT could pursue, however, this year, the OTC has directed the agency to pursue this important project because of its potential to improve the state's transportation system.

A century ago, the Columbia River Highway was constructed through the Columbia River Gorge, one of America's great natural wonders. As America's first scenic highway, it served thousands of travelers and took full advantage of the Columbia River Gorge's natural beauty and became known as the "King of Roads." Much of this original highway has been lost, and the remaining sections have been disconnected for decades. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act of 1986 directed the State of Oregon to connect these abandoned highway sections as a pedestrian and bike trail. Today, a great deal of work is underway to complete this vision. In fact, five miles of the Historic Highway State Trail will be under construction in 2016 – the highway's centennial year.

If funded, this important project will construct 1.7 miles of the remaining five miles of abandoned Columbia River Highway awaiting reconnection as the State Trail. Combined with existing trail segments and those under construction, this project will contribute to the completion of a 7.7 mile continuous trail corridor between the Gorton Creek Trailhead at Wyeth and Perham Creek. Momentum and excitement is building in the Gorge around the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail and the highway's centennial. When completed, the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail will create a world-class cycling and safe transportation corridor that will enhance the livability and the economy of the communities in the Columbia River Gorge.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

Tammy Baney
Chair
Oregon Transportation Commission