January 6, 2015

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: CECW–CE, Lisa Kiefel
441 G Street NW.
Washington, DC 20314–1000

Dear Ms. Kiefel:

The Port of Portland is writing in support of Multnomah County Drainage District's (MCDD) feasibility study proposal for inclusion in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' annual report. For the last year, the Port of Portland has participated, alongside MCDD, in a state sponsored "Oregon Solutions" project that brings together public agencies, business groups, neighborhood associations and non-profit organizations focused on the condition of the levee system that reduces flood risk in North Portland and neighbor cities on the South shore of the Columbia River.

To date, the Oregon Solutions project has completed an initial engineering assessment in two of the four levee districts managed by MCDD. The successful collaboration is motivated by partners' shared recognition of the levee system's role in protecting lives and property, national security, economic prosperity, regional transportation, and environmental sustainability. Additionally, through the Oregon Solutions process, public entities with jurisdiction over the protected area have acknowledged the importance of a continually accredited levee system to the region. This acknowledgment has included a financial contribution to complete the levee analysis and develop preliminary options for remediation during fiscal year 2014-15. This contribution is in the form of a $1.4 million low-interest loan. The Port of Portland has committed $300,000 toward repaying a portion of this seven-year loan, and has already paid $200,00 to date and will make its final $100,000 contribution in July 2015.

The engineering analysis completed to date has identified a significant issue in the levee system that MCDD's proposal is intended to address, which is that the authorized level of protection varies across all four districts. In addition to this issue, the Oregon Solutions process has also identified a need to address a deficiency at the western edge of the system: where an existing railroad embankment will no longer serve as a certified levee. Addressing this deficiency will result in a modification to an existing USACE authorized project. Finally, certification in two of the Districts managed by MCDD has already expired and the other two will expire in 2017. MCDD has a pressing need to ensure that the districts can be re-certified and re-accredited as the resources behind the levee hold regional significance.

The Port of Portland is a multi-modal port, overseeing both seaport and airport operations, and is the region's largest developer of commercial and industrial properties, including repurposing brownfield sites. The levee system protects over 40 percent of the port's facilities, including the Portland International Airport, Troutdale Airport, and Troutdale Reynolds Industrial Park, among other Port assets. The Portland International Airport serves over 15 million passengers annually, handles more than a quarter million tons of air cargo, and provides service from 20 carriers with more than 500 passenger flights daily.

The Port of Portland hopes that you strongly consider including MCDD's feasibility study proposal in the annual report. I can be reached at (503) 415-6331 if you have any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Philip Ralston
General Manager, Environmental Operations
Port's Designee to the Boards of Multnomah County Drainage District and Sandy Drainage Improvement Company