



John Boren, john.boren@odot.oregon.gov,
Freight Program Manager

Dear Connect Oregon 10 Project Grant Review Program:

We write in strong support for the application by the Port of Coos Bay for the **Charleston Shipyard Improvement Project - Phase 1, Marine Ways Replacement**. This project is a key component for maintaining and increasing the capacity for Charleston to meet the demands of the coastal commercial and recreational maritime transportation industry. The fishing and maritime industry is an important part of our regional economy, and this project comes at a time of increased federal emphasis to build a resilient national seafood sector to support US seafood competitiveness. An increased emphasis on domestic production will increase our need for domestic processing and transport industries.

The commercial fishing industry in Charleston supports more than 280 direct jobs. Services at the Charleston Shipyard are crucial for the continued survival of the Charleston fishing fleet. Currently, the shipyard employs an average of 20 full-time positions between Giddings Boatworks, Tarheel Aluminum and the Port. It is anticipated that the replacement of the marine ways will allow the Charleston Shipyard businesses to return to the historic economic driver it once was and at key time of increased state and federal recognition of this industry.

The **Marine Ways Replacement** provides essential maritime infrastructure to haul vessels out of the water for repair, maintenance, retrofits, and construction. The existing marine ways are more than 40 years old and currently limit vessel size, capacity, and operational efficiency. This project will not only retain and support the existing jobs but will increase the overall capacity of the shipyard. The improved marine ways will attract additional vessels from the surrounding regions for repairs and fabrication that currently have had to be accommodated elsewhere. Increased capacity will allow for additional local workforce development in welding, fabrication, machine services and repair, supporting a highly skilled career workforce sector.

Additionally, the improvements will have substantial economic and environmental benefits, such as reducing vessel travel to distant shipyards, lowering fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and shortening the time needed for repairs and maintenance. The upgraded facility will increase service capacity for larger vessels and help support approximately 93 percent of the regional fleet that falls within the serviceable vessel range.

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<https://my.lwv.org/oregon/coos-county>

The League of Women Voters of Coos County has studied and followed the International Port of Coos Bay since 1962. We review their programs and projects and regularly attend Port meetings. Our recent study update (2023) identified support for the Charleston fishing community, its associated businesses and institutions in Charleston as a high priority to assure future sustainability. We encourage and support use of existing Port assets that increase the community's total disposable income without compromising existing elements of the local economy. In conclusion, the **Marine Ways Replacement** will improve the capacity and reliability of all the marine services at the Charleston shipyard and reduce the need for vessels to travel to other locations for services and parts. Support for this facility will enhance the long-term economy and grow community assets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jackie Clary". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large initial 'J' and a distinct 'C'.

Jackie Clary
President, League of Women Voters, Coos County