



from the office of

SENATOR BILL KENNEMER

PRESS RELEASE

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Willamette Falls Locks Ownership Transfer Begins

HB 2564 begins the process of giving local control over the Willamette Falls Locks

OREGON CITY, Ore. – On Thursday, Senator Bill Kennemer voted for [House Bill 2564](#) that would convert the Willamette Falls Locks Commission into a public corporation. The legislation is expected to help revitalize businesses and tourism around Willamette Falls.

HB 2564 establishes the Willamette Falls Locks Authority to negotiate the transfer of the Locks from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Authority will act as the owner, operator, and manager, and regulator of the Locks.

“I have been working on getting the Locks reopening for at least 20 years,” Senator Kennemer, who sponsored the legislation, said. “In fact, I first voted for this legislative concept in 2009. This is the first step to turning the Willamette Falls Locks into an asset for our community once again. As the Oregon City area continues to grow, the Locks will provide a much-needed source of investment and growth opportunities.”

The federal government has already allocated \$3.4 million for repairs and upgrades of the Locks. Oregon’s congressional delegation is working to secure an additional \$6.6 million for the revitalization effort. Matching funds of \$10-14 million of state bonds from the state are currently pending in the Ways & Means Committee to help the Locks open and continue operating.

A decade ago, the Locks were put under “caretaker” status by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers because of safety concerns, closing the facility. Since that closure, a business plan was created to revitalize the Locks back to operation.

“Operational Locks will provide much-needed economic development, tourism, and recreation,” Senator Kennemer continued. “Now more than ever our small businesses and citizens in Willamette River communities need some good news. This is some good news they can get excited about.”

A 2018 ECONorthwest [analysis](#) estimated that a functional Willamette Falls Locks could provide the region with nearly \$100 million in direct economic benefits to the region’s transportation and tourism industries.

The bill passed the Senate on a 23-4 vote and the House on a 54-3 vote. It will now head to the Governor for her signature.

You can watch Senator Kennemer's remarks on the Senate floor [here](#).

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