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**CITY OF NEWPORT REPRESENTATIVES
ADVOCATE FOR FEDERAL FUNDING
FOR THE BIG CREEK DAM REPLACEMENT PROEJCT**

Earlier this week, representatives from the City of Newport, including Mayor Dean Sawyer and State Representative David Gomberg, traveled to Washington, D.C. to advocate for federal funding to advance the Big Creek Dam Replacement Project.

In 2011, engineers learned that the two earthen dams that store the city's sole source of water were seismically unstable. Even a minor earthquake could cause catastrophic failure, which would endanger the safety and drinking water supply for the city's 10,000 residents and 2.5 million visitors annually during summer months. Since learning of the threat posed by the dam, the city has been working on a replacement dam to ensure it can continue to provide residents and visitors with safe drinking water and support public safety.

Replacement costs for the project were estimated to be at least \$80 million prior to the pandemic; however, this cost grows the longer the project is delayed.

The regional economic and public safety impacts of this project are significant. A new dam will secure the city's sole water supply and support public safety, critical infrastructure, federal and state investments, local industry and residents located below the dams. To date, the city has invested six million dollars of its own money, and Representative David Gomberg worked to secure \$14 million in lottery bonding for the city during the 2021 legislative session to allow Newport to move forward with design, permitting, and construction. However, federal funding is necessary to replace this dam, given the size of the community and the immediate need.

This trip to Washington, D.C. builds on work by local officials to secure the funds necessary to complete this project.

After wrapping up the second day on Capitol Hill, Mayor Sawyer said, "I was impressed that our Congressional delegation had such a depth of knowledge about our dam replacement project in Newport, Oregon. They were very receptive and are working hard in Washington, DC to ensure that the \$60 million authorization for the Big Creek Dam replacement project is included in the final negotiated WRDA bill. We appreciate Senators Wyden and Merkley and Congressmen Schrader and Defazio for their work to include our authorization in the final bill. This authorization is a significant step forward for the city and will help us advance this critical project."

Representative Gomberg shared his experience advocating for the project, “I’m not always a fan of these types of trips but this one was meaningful, well-organized, and critically timed. The U.S. House of Representatives has already authorized funding for our project in the Water Resources Development Act, and the Senate will be finishing their work on the bill in the next six weeks. We met with the committees that are making the decisions and then with our own senators and congressmen. We, and they, are encouraged that there is momentum to bring home much-needed federal funding to replace Newport’s failing dams.”



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