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Gorge Commissioners
Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area
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Dear Commissioners,

We are residents and property owners who live in Wasco County near The Dalles, Oregon. We have read through the key issues in the Draft Gorge Management Plan Review and we have one issue we would like to provide comments on as part of this public comment period. We would first, however, like to thank you for the time and effort you have put into developing this comprehensive, updated document.

We support the position that the Gorge Commission has taken on the Urban Growth Boundary, regarding the development of a reasonable definition of "minor revisions" and the inclusion of that very restricted definition, and "boundary" in the draft Plan. We are very concerned about the fairly unanimous effort by our City and County elected officials, and staff, to have this component of the draft Plan set aside in favor of a much, more generous interpretation of the term "minor revisions" which most likely lead to a large expansion of The Dalles and Dallesport Urban Growth Boundaries, in particular, and the other Incorporated Cities within the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, in general.

We adamantly oppose that endeavor. We understand that the mission of the Scenic Act is "to protect scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources from adverse effects." We believe that allowing for larger, rather than minor, expansions of Urban Growth Boundaries of Incorporated Cities within the Gorge would be in direct conflict to this stated goal.

We have reviewed the "Buildable Lands Inventory" that was conducted on behalf of the City of The Dalles in 2018 in which it was concluded that The Dalles has a surplus of buildable land available for new housing.

The Dalles also has many abandoned business locations which can, and should be, redeveloped, for commercial use. For example: K Mart, Sears, Red's Trading Post, as well as open lots, such as the former Armory property, that are available as well. And there are numerous, core, downtown properties that would benefit from redevelopment and enhancement of the City of The Dalles.

Industrially, we not only have a number of Port of The Dalles properties that are available for commercial and light industrial development, there are a number of properties that are part of the Airport complex in Dallesport which are available for development (shovel-ready, as they say), as well as other properties in the Dallesport incorporated area that are zoned and available for industrial development.

We strongly encourage the Commission to stand strong and choose to not allow communities, such as The Dalles, and Dallesport, to expand their Urban Growth Boundaries beyond the constraints of your "minor revisions" definition. These communities have sufficient room to grow, to infill, to redevelop, and to industrialize. We don't want them to have what the Scenic Area Act was attempting to constrain, and that is the on-going ability to sprawl, and expand, outside of the areas for development, that they were generously awarded in the 1986 Act.

Please continue to work together to find and encourage ways for communities to remain economically robust within existing boundaries. These times require us to be more conservative with our resources and mindful of how we take care of the present generation while we continue to work to develop and pass on environmentally, economically and equitable residential, commercial and industrial communities to the next generation/s.

Thank you again for your work, and your commitment, to protect, sustain, and enhance our beautiful Columbia River Gorge.

Most sincerely,

Marolyn Wilks and Bruce Lumper