



February 25, 2019

Dear Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Alonso Leon & Helt, and Members of the Committee:

The League of Oregon Cities represents all 241 incorporated cities in the state of Oregon. Cities are often looking for the best ways to partner with experts, recruit the next generation of trained staff, and keep their cities working. One important tool that some cities have accessed was the Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP). This program advances local community redevelopment efforts, provides applied education for college students and develops the next generation Oregon workforce.

Each year, SCYP works in a different community and matches community-identified project ideas with up to 35 university courses, 20+ faculty, and 500 students across more than 12 disciplines giving over 40,000 hours of effort. Students add capacity to local staff and provide fresh thoughts and concepts to revitalize the community they are working in.

SCYP has worked in partnership with numerous small and large cities throughout Oregon, both rural and urban. Examples include: Gresham, Salem, Springfield, Medford, Redmond, and Albany. The program also piloted two new expansions of its model, including partnering with TriMet for its proposed 12-mile Southwest Corridor light rail project, which impacts a number of cities, and with the City of La Pine.

SCYP partners must meet several standards, including buy-in from local political leadership and staff, interest in a range of community improvement issues, and having financial “skin in the game.” Cities participating in the program provide \$60,000–\$350,000, which leverages \$150,000–\$400,000 of investment directly from the UO through faculty and staff time as well as professional program coordination. Unfortunately, many small communities want to participate in the program but often cannot find the financial resources.

With a biennial appropriation of \$300,000, SCYP could help more Oregon cities— both urban and rural—become program partners. A more stable, predictable state appropriation will allow diverse Oregon communities take full advantage of this unique program. Therefore, the LOC urges your support of HB 2594.