To: Honorable Fred Girod and Honorable Paul Holvey, Co-Chairs
        Members, Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Capital
        Construction

Re: Adding Capital Funding for PSU's Vernier Science Center to HB 5201

Dear Senator Girod and Representative Holvey,

As a staff member at Portland State University, I am writing to strongly support the use of public funds to renovate PSU's undergraduate science building.

PSU is a truly public institution: We are not sequestered behind beautiful stone walls and a hefty endowment, but truly integrated with the community physically and through a great many collaborative efforts and relationships. We 'serve the city' and the state of Oregon by producing useful research and scholarship that benefits our region, and readying our students to be active and useful citizens.

Our single greatest strength lies in the diversity of our undergraduates. More than half of our STEM students are first-generation, low-income students from historically underrepresented groups. These students come to us often less prepared than their more fortunate peers, but no less talented. They deserve a facility and programs that will help them succeed, one that reflects what we know works in science education -- multidisciplinary, collaborative learning that crosses departments and encourages students to think creatively.

The new Vernier Science Center will engage these diverse thinkers and help prepare them for the modern workforce. We have the faculty and staff to bring this to fruition -- we need a modern, up-to-date facility that can provide the space and amenities to allow it to happen.

Thank you to all members of the Capital Construction subcommittee for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Molly Kramer

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