

Thank you for the opportunity to bring forward my ideas for SB 5555. My name is Nicholas Calvin and I am the Director for Harney County Health Department in Burns, Oregon. In an effort to spur job development and health equity in East Oregon, I support the effort to use part of the economic development funds to build an Oregon State Public Health Lab facility in Eastern Oregon. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of infrastructure to combat the pandemic in East Oregon led to serious issues in such a large state. As a health department, we had to send COVID test samples to the only state lab in Hillsboro on the opposite side of the state or to labs in Washington. This took days to send and because we only have one lab, took days and sometimes weeks to provide test results to East Oregonians due to the overwhelming strain on the lab. We believe a lab in East Oregon would solve this problem and prevent it in the future. This development should fall under Governor Brown's 10 Point Economic Plan Action #3, supporting local government in planning and growth and we have the support of Harney County's local government and regional support. In addition, it would fall under Action #10 to support entrepreneurial and innovative development in bringing high skill job opportunities to East Oregonians who otherwise have little chance of finding a STEM job. Thank you for your consideration.