



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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April 23, 2021

The Honorable Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Paul Holvey, Co-Chair
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SB 5506 Capital Construction Limitation and SB 5505 Bonding Authorization, for Oregon Youth Authority funding requests

Dear Co-Chairs and members of the subcommittee:

I am writing to provide background information and support for funding for Oregon Youth Authority projects included in Senate Bills 5506 and 5505.

All the OYA projects proposed in these bills are critical to the juvenile justice system's mission of protecting the public, reducing crime, holding youth accountable, and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments. They also are important to our agency's two largest initiatives — diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and positive human development (PHD) — both of which are rooted in research and best practices for reducing recidivism and rehabilitating youth. Lastly, the technology ask, which I will explain below, is important not just to OYA, but to every county in the state.

SB 5505 and 5506: OYA Capital Construction and Improvements

OYA's capital construction and improvements projects support our mission by constructing secure and safe physical plant environments that are conducive to youth reformation, equity, and inclusion.

In 2014, OYA developed a 10-Year Strategic Plan for Facilities to serve as a road map for capital construction. The plan, updated in 2019, focuses on resolving deferred maintenance needs and aligning physical spaces to national and state best practices for juvenile treatment and reformation programs.

The changes proposed in the 10-Year Strategic Plan are critical to supporting research-based, positive youth development services, and they are also important to our agency's efforts to deliver services that are culturally-appropriate, equitable, and inclusive. The renovations also address much-needed seismic upgrades to many youth living units.

OYA has already been a good steward of the dollars awarded for past projects in this plan, including six new living units at MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility, and a new school at Rogue Valley Youth Correctional Facility. The projects, including deferred maintenance, that need funding moving forward include:

1. **Renovate and expand the living unit and support areas at Tillamook Youth Correctional Facility (\$10,495,000):** The two living units at this facility have not had a major renovation since they were built in the mid-1990s using a correctional, boot camp-style design. With small "gun slot" windows, little sunlight, cramped day rooms and restrooms that lack privacy and do not comply with the federal Prison Rape

Elimination Act, these living units are counterproductive to the principles of Positive Human Development. The remodel would resolve deferred maintenance, ensure that the interior spaces align with best practices, and create a developmentally-based physical environment.

2. **Renovate and expand the living unit and support areas at Camp Riverbend Youth Transitional Facility near La Grande (\$6,975,000):** Camp Riverbend has two main buildings: the main Riverbend building, built in 2001, and the Hilgard building, built in 1979. Neither has had a major renovation since it was built; both will be renovated in this project. The original construction was based on a correctional, boot camp-style design, with small windows, little daylight, cramped day rooms, and restrooms that lack privacy and do not comply with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act. Just like the Tillamook remodel, the Riverbend project would fix the issues listed above while creating a developmentally-based physical environment.
3. **Renovate and expand the living unit and support areas at MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility in Woodburn (\$8,125,000):** MacLaren has eight living units on the west side of the campus that were built in the 1960s. In 2016, one unit was completely remodeled to address long-standing maintenance needs and to align with best practices and PHD standards. Currently, five more units are getting the same overhaul. The requested funding will allow us to renovate the last two west side cottages, providing the youth housed in these units an equitable living situation compared to the other six cottages. Along with resolving all deferred maintenance, the projects will make sure interior spaces are aligned with PHD standards and have a normative, residential character.
4. **Build a new parole and probation office at the site of Oak Creek Youth Correctional Facility in Albany (\$1,685,000):** The current parole and probation office building on the Oak Creek site is a modular building that is 20 years old and is not adequately sized to support current and projected operations. In addition, OYA's strategic plan for the Oak Creek site requires the parole and probation building to be relocated to make room for a new vocational education facility and school to be constructed in the 2023-25 biennium, if funding is approved. Oak Creek is the only female OYA facility, and the school/vocational education project will pave the way for establishing much-needed equity for female youth. The current parole/probation building would require a significant investment to renovate and expand to meet current needs. Instead, our plan is to relocate the office site and build a new building.
5. **Replace emergency standby generator at MacLaren (\$1,825,000):** The existing generator is 20 years old and is showing signs of significant wear, making total failure likely. MacLaren's power needs have increased significantly in the past 20 years. The campus has experienced several electrical outages where the generator and emergency standby generator failed, most recently during the February 2021 ice storm. The standby generator powers electronic security systems, door locking systems, security cameras, lighting systems, heating and air conditioning, and more. In other words, it is a critical piece of safety equipment that must operate when needed.
6. **Resolve deferred maintenance and capital renewal at all OYA sites (\$6,880,000):** Senate Bill 1067 targets a minimum 2% funding level, based on the current facility portfolio replacement value, for deferred maintenance/capital renewal. However, based on OYA's 2020 Capital Projects Advisory Board report, OYA will need a 2.7% funding level to lower its Facility Condition Index (FCI) to an acceptable rating. A funding level of only 2% would mean that our FCI percentage rating would continue to climb from its current level of 13% and aggravate the deterioration of our portfolio of facilities.

SB 5505: Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) Modernization

Senate Bill 5505 includes bonding for the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) modernization project. I have one point of clarification around the amount we are requesting: in the bill it's noted as \$16,855,000; however, the correct amount of the request is \$7,905,198 in bonds to fund this project during the 2021-23 biennium. An amendment is currently being drafted to address this.

Oregon's entire state and local juvenile justice continuum relies on the JJIS as its unified core business application to track and implement individualized case plans. JJIS is used by more than 3,000 juvenile justice practitioners

across the state. By statute, the state is responsible for stewarding this unified information system, the likes of which only exist in two other states. JJIS is governed by board comprising local and state juvenile justice professionals.

But the software platform on which JJIS operates is over 20 years old and no longer adequately supported by the developers who created it. If we do not modernize the system, it likely will fail, threatening the ability of juvenile justice professionals to do their jobs. Additionally, juvenile justice professionals need access to the data in JJIS at any time and any place, given the 24-hour nature of our jobs, and the current JJIS application does not allow this. The modernized version would be useable on mobile devices so case workers can get important information wherever and whenever they need it.

JJIS also needs significant upgrades to support greater disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity. This will help us identify systemic inequities so that we can begin working to correct them. JJIS is already an essential source of the data we use in our Youth Reformation System to create tools that assist juvenile system practitioners in making data-driven decisions to improve youth outcomes. These, and all of OYA's major initiatives, rely heavily on JJIS and would not be able to move forward if the system is not modernized.

Secretary of State audits of the existing JJIS system have clearly identified risks to critical reporting required by the Legislature, including data integrity, timeliness, and statewide evaluation of juvenile justice effectiveness. If we don't modernize JJIS, there will come a time at which these risks can shut down the ability to do the work of juvenile justice at both the state and the county levels. The obsolescence of the existing software affects our work with youth, their families, communities, and victims, and threatens the capacity of Oregon counties and OYA to reduce crime and improve outcomes for underserved populations.

The project consistently gets some of the highest marks from the Enterprise Information Technology Governance Committee and has received Stage-Gate Two endorsement. Currently, we are working toward Stage Gate 3 and in the process of hiring a solution and implementation vendor. To continue this work, we need continued project funding. Halting the project now would only cost more in the long run.

All of these projects are critical for our state's juvenile justice system to continue protecting the public, holding youth accountable, and providing opportunities for reformation in ways that are culturally-responsive, equitable, inclusive, and conducive to positive development.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe O'Leary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "O".

Joe O'Leary
Director, Oregon Youth Authority
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