

City of Roseburg

900 S.E. Douglas Avenue Roseburg, Oregon 97470 | www.cityofroseburg.org | Phone (541) 492-6700

April 21, 2023

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Elizabeth Steiner
Representative Tawna Sanchez

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and Honorable Committee Members:

My name is Nikki Messenger and I serve as the City Manager for the City of Roseburg. I am writing to support multiple funding proposals that are currently before you. Unhoused homelessness has impacted areas of our state differently. I believe that the impacts on rural communities may be underestimated when compared to the overwhelming numbers seen in the metro areas. But the fact is, the *impacts* may actually be greater given the limited resources. Cities like Roseburg are located in the “Balance of State” continuum of care and are not eligible for direct federal HUD funding. We are currently utilizing our precious general fund dollars to pay costs associated with camp clean ups, RV removals, dedicated employee costs, vandalism repairs, sanitary stations and other costs associated with the impacts.

There are a number of specific proposals that can help. While the inclusion of the Balance of State in the Governor’s emergency housing/homeless bill was a step in the right direction, it appears that funding is for expanding shelter capacity. It does not help maintain the new shelter spaces and/or navigation centers that have been created to deal with this crisis. Page 129 of Governor Kotek’s proposed budget includes funding ongoing operational costs for existing navigation centers in the OHCS budget. Please support this request.

The City of Roseburg was fortunate to receive a \$1.5 million legislative grant in 2021 to open a navigation center. Roseburg partnered with United Community Action Network, our local CoC, and opened the first phase of the Gary Leif Navigation Center in June of 2022. The renovation of the building continues and the second phase, which will add an additional 30 beds, is scheduled to be complete in July. Acquisition, construction and start-up costs total in excess of \$1.8 million. An OHCS grant assisted with operational costs in the current biennium, and we have secured outside grants totaling \$300,000 to help support operations moving forward. Unfortunately, that leaves over a \$1 million gap in operational funding in the next fiscal year, on top of the \$300,000 deficit in the capital costs. Ongoing financial support is going to be critical to keeping the navigation center open.

Other bills/funding proposals in this same arena include the Oregon Mayor’s Association proposal. This would provide an annual, direct allocation to cities for homelessness

response and prevention services. HB 3556 would create a fund at ODOT to help offset the rising costs associated with dealing with abandoned RV's. Roseburg has dealt with a number of problem RVs. Costs can run between \$3,000 and \$7,000 each for proper disposal, and those costs add up quickly and impact other important community services.

There are many efforts underway to both help the homeless and to mitigate their impacts on our communities. Funding support is critical to the success of these efforts.

There are three other bills I would request you support.

First, SB 1009 is essential to providing Veterans the care they have earned. This should be a high priority for the entire state. Please support this bill ensuring construction of a new state veterans' home in Roseburg.

Second, I want to ask for your support for HB 2872 funding Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Program statewide. This modest investment of \$1.7 million can make a lifelong impact on literacy, especially for youth in rural areas.

Lastly, I humbly request your support for expanding classes at DPSST. Like most departments, staffing challenges in the Roseburg Police Department have grown significantly in the last three years. DPSST is a critical component to our efforts to hire and train high quality individuals to serve our community. Please continue to support DPSST at a level that allows for expansion in the number of police recruits they can train year round.

Thank you for your commitment and thank you for taking the time to consider my written testimony.

Respectfully,



Nikki Messenger
City Manager