

Re: Support House Bill 2410

Dear Committee Members of the Oregon Legislature,

As a former commissioner of the Malheur County Court, I strongly encourage you to vote in favor of House Bill 2410, which will authorize issuance of lottery bonds for the Ontario Community Recreation Center project.

The Ontario Recreation District has been charged by the community of Ontario to formulate and implement strategies for drastic improvement in the community through increased recreational opportunities and we believe that HB 2410 represents one avenue in meeting our mission.

The City of Ontario is the epicenter of the rural border region that continues to struggle to compete with growing communities in Idaho. A community recreation center may be disregarded in the greater understanding of local economics but is consistently overlooked in its capacity to provide amenities that attract new families to live in our community. New families that will subsequently increase the greater labor pool available to new businesses providing additional jobs to Ontario.

Many community recreation facilities historically show difficulty in sustainability due to a lack of operating and maintenance funds. The Ontario Recreation District tax levy was passed in 2018 to provide adequate funding for a reasonable community facility within Ontario. Additionally an increase in the transient occupancy tax was passed in 2022 to allow for an additional 1% to be allocated for the Ontario Community Recreation Center. These measures were accomplished by the City of Ontario, County of Malheur, and Ontario Recreation District working together to show their support of this project.

In this sense, HB 2410 will be providing the capital funding needed to allow the Ontario Recreation District to sustainably provide attractive and adequate recreation opportunities for current and future community members.

The families that I work with and interact with daily strongly support HB 2410: they view it as means to retain families in our community and attract new ones to live in the Border region rather than in Idaho.

Thank you for your consideration and support for HB 2410.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Hodge".

Former Commissioner,
Malheur County Court