

Submitter: Steve Gordon

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital
Construction

Measure: HB5201

Feb. 15, 2024

Dear Co-Chair Girod and Co-Chair Holvey,

As president and CEO of St. Charles Health System located in Bend, I am writing to express my support for Oregon State University's capital funding request for \$24 million. This funding is necessary to help the OSU-Cascades campus complete the next phase of its expansion.

St. Charles is the largest employer in Central Oregon with more than 4,800 caregivers in our three-county service region. We are the only hospital system for a geographic area roughly the size of South Carolina. We rely on OSU-Cascades as a critical partner as we strive to grow our own health care workforce to meet the needs of our rapidly growing Central Oregon population.

Thanks to OSU-Cascades, we have an excellent doctor of physical therapy program right here in our backyard that we know will help us fulfill our patient needs for physical therapy services into the future. The new biochemistry and molecular biology degree is another example of a major created for students interested in medical school or a health care career. And, we understand that OSU-Cascades is considering future degree programs in occupational and speech therapy along with audiology.

Research repeatedly shows that health care professionals are much more likely to stay and work in the community in which they trained. As the OSU-Cascades campus grows, we hope to be able to partner on additional health care-related career pathways that will add to our pipeline of future frontline health care workers.

It is clear to me and our St. Charles leadership team that OSU-Cascades has the community's best interest and needs at heart. I hope you will support this funding request and encourage continued economic and workforce development in Central Oregon through the power of higher education.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steve Gordon, MD, MPP, FACP
President and CEO

St. Charles Health System