



February 13, 2024

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair

Representative Paul Holvey, Co-Chair

Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

900 Court Street NE

Salem OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of funding for the Greater Woodburn Opportunity Center. The project helps to meet a critical need for affordable housing and wrap-around services in Woodburn and the greater Woodburn area for people who are struggling with poverty.

In Woodburn, 13.7% of residents live in poverty. Per capita income in Woodburn is \$22,311, compared to \$35,393 statewide. Children under age 5 comprise 6.9% of the population, compared to 5.4% statewide. Hispanic individuals represent 57% of Woodburn's population, compared to 13.4% of all Oregonians. Fifty-four percent of Woodburn residents speak a language other than English in their home compared to 15% statewide. Seventy percent of adults in Woodburn are high school graduates, significantly lower than the statewide rate of 91%. While the need in Woodburn is great, this opportunity to transform the lives of children and families is greater.

At Marion Polk Food Share we bring people together to end hunger and its root causes. We consider the Greater Woodburn Opportunity Center to be an invaluable resource for the community it serves and wholeheartedly support its development. The Center will play a crucial role in providing 50 new affordable homes with wrap around community services to a vulnerable population in Marion County. We share their vision of providing care and resources for basic needs to the community members who require them.

We fully endorse this program knowing that it will have a positive impact on our community. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Gaupo". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Rick Gaupo
President & CEO