

January 29, 2025

House Higher Education Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301



Subject: Letter of Support for the Sustainable City Year Program at the University of Oregon

Dear Members of the House Higher Education Committee,

On behalf of the City of Hermiston, I am pleased to offer our support for the Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) at the University of Oregon. Our city had the privilege of participating in SCYP in 2022, and the experience was very valuable. It provided our staff with fresh perspectives and an energized approach to addressing community challenges.

Through our collaboration with SCYP, we engaged with talented students and faculty who brought creative ideas, and new strategies to some pressing local issues. The program infused our city departments with new energy, empowering our staff to think differently, embrace innovative solutions, and build upon their professional expertise. The interdisciplinary approach of SCYP allowed us to explore policy solutions that might not have been possible within the constraints of our day-to-day operations.

Specifically, our partnership with SCYP resulted in the implementation of a new street design directly based on the recommendations of one of the student teams we worked with.

Beyond this specific policy benefit, SCYP has also strengthened our community by fostering collaboration between our local government and the academic community including a group from Eastern Oregon University in our region. It has created pathways for public service career exploration among students and built long-lasting relationships that benefit both our city and the University of Oregon.

We urge the committee to support funding for the Sustainable City Year Program to ensure that more communities across Oregon can benefit from these positive impacts. SCYP is a unique and invaluable resource that not only enhances the education of university students but also empowers local governments to innovate and thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Byron D. Smith
City Manager
City of Hermiston
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