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February 9, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

As both the head coach of the Roseburg High School Girls Soccer Team and a board member of Umpqua United Soccer Club, I am writing to express my strong support for the \$15 million state legislative grant request to help fund the Douglas County Youth Sports Park. Our soccer programs—and more importantly, our athletes—have long been at a disadvantage due to the lack of quality field space in our community. This project is the opportunity we need to level the playing field and give every child a chance to develop their full potential.

Right now, our community has no turf soccer fields, and the few grass fields available are often in poor condition. Because of our heavy fall rains, these fields quickly become unplayable, forcing teams to cancel practices and games. In a typical year, the grass fields are unplayable November-March, leaving the 600+ kids who play soccer in our community unable to practice or play for almost half of a calendar year. This has a direct impact on player development, especially for young athletes trying to build fundamental skills. Our kids are being left behind, not because they lack talent, but because they lack the facilities to train and compete at the level of other programs across the state.

The impact is particularly significant for girls' soccer. Without accessible, high-quality fields, many young female athletes never get the chance to train consistently, develop their technical skills, or gain the experience needed to compete at a higher level. The only players who advance to high-caliber competition are those who can afford to play on travel teams, which means parents have to take their kids out of town for practices and tournaments—a barrier that excludes many low-income families and particularly impacts children of single working parents.

The Douglas County Youth Sports Park would change everything. With turf soccer fields that are playable year-round, we could grow our programs, provide more opportunities for young players to develop, and create a pathway for girls and boys alike to reach their full potential. More kids would be able to train locally, compete in better conditions, and have a fair shot at playing at the next level.

Soccer is a sport that builds confidence, discipline, and a lifelong love of the game. But without adequate facilities, too many children in our community are missing out. I strongly encourage full support for this funding request. The Douglas County Youth Sports Park will be a game-changer for youth soccer and for the future of girls' sports in our region.

Sincerely,

Janelle Newton
Board Member, Umpqua United Soccer Club
Head Coach, Roseburg High School Girls Soccer

Positive. Respectful. Involved. Determined. Encouraging.

