

Submitter: Candace Solesbee
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

HB5006

Greetings members of the Committee,

I signed up to speak, but because of the two-hour time constraint, I did not get the opportunity. Instead I am sharing written testimony. Thank you for your consideration. I am grateful.

My name is Candace Solesbee, and I am the mayor of Cottage Grove, Oregon. I have also served as a long time volunteer on various boards and committees in Lane County.

I am representing a collaborative group of seven nonprofits in Lane County known as "CORA," which has come together to request lottery bond funding for crucial quality of life projects in our area. We recognize the significant pressures and concerns that legislators face regarding potential budget cuts, and we truly appreciate all the work you are doing. I would like to clarify that our request is entirely funded through lottery bonds and does not involve any operating funds. While we understand the total amount of available lottery bond funding is yet to be determined, we estimate that our request of \$6 million could represent about 1% of the total.

Although we are seven individual projects, we are collaborating because we share the same values:

- Serve community needs
- Provide services that are free or low-cost to our low-income community
- Maintain low barriers to access
- Address family needs for community engagement, physical health, mental health, and access to the outdoors
- Ensure many of our projects create ADA/Wheelchair accessibility and support emergency services
- Unite to support our entire communities rather than compete for funds
- include both rural and urban areas

My passion for this project grew even stronger after the ice storm that affected our community just over a year ago. It was heartbreaking to witness the loss of vulnerable lives, particularly because many were unaware of the emergency services available to them. This funding would greatly address that issue through a community reader board. Additionally, Bohemia Park plays a vital role in providing cultural and educational opportunities for those who might not otherwise have access to them.

Our group has raised millions of dollars in public and private funding, Alongside thousands of volunteer hours. Together, we have secured \$21 million of the \$27 million needed, and we are requesting the remaining \$6.3 million from the state. This will serve as completion funding and represents a one-time request. We believe that our communities require long-term infrastructure to ensure Oregon remains livable and to support the quality of life for all residents. We hope you will support the seven meaningful projects of CORRA.

with gratitude,

Mayor Solesbee
Cottage Grove, Oregon
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