

April 17, 2025

To: Co-Chairs Sanchez and Lieber, Vice Chairs, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

Fm: Bill Weismann

Re: Support for HB 5006 – Capital Construction Request

My name is Bill Weismann and I serve as Project Coordinator for the proposed Greater Woodburn Opportunity Center (GWOC). Today I testify in support of the \$20 million “shovel ready” capital construction request for GWOC from Community Resource Trust of Salem, this project’s nonprofit developer.

For the past seven years I have facilitated development of the GWOC vision involving dozens of community meetings and 1:1 conversations that affirmed the need for a multicultural, intergenerational community gathering space. This facility – endorsed by the Woodburn Mayor and City Manager - is desperately needed – as Woodburn is a rapidly growing, majority Latino community that will soon exceed 35,000 residents – a 25% increase in just the past 5 years. Designation as a Title 1 School District confirms the city’s high poverty rate.

A 2020 Feasibility Study positively affirmed this project’s 8 acre campus plan – on land owned by Woodburn’s Immanuel Lutheran Church and dedicated to public benefit – as its compelling vision resulted from a community listening process engaging a diverse range of Latino leaders, Russian Old Believers, the Chamber of Commerce, service clubs and dozens of other residents.

The Center will be a safe, welcoming space for public and private events, providing one-stop access to multiple co-located social service agencies, a senior center and child care center. Some of these agencies – like Mano a Mano, Family Building Blocks, Community Action, Catholic Community Services and CASA of Marion County – are based in Salem and seek a Woodburn location where they can collaborate in this integrated service-delivery model. An added value to this project will be a 50-unit affordable housing community to be managed by Farmworker Housing Development Corporation on 2 acres of the 8 acre campus.

History tells us the Valley Migrant League operated a Woodburn Opportunity Center in the 1960s to advance Latinos' social and economic success. It's now time for the Greater Woodburn Opportunity Center to build on this legacy and achieve the dream of a better tomorrow for all.

I have been connected to Woodburn for 40 years and have come to recognize and respect it as a dynamic multicultural community.

I call for your support to fund this project's Capital Construction request. Thank for your consideration.