

April 17, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Full Ways & Means
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Submitted electronically via OLIS

RE: HB 5006, State Budget and coastal resiliency support

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith and members of the full Ways and Means. I am Lesley Ogden, Vice President and CEO of Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital in Newport and Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City. I am here this evening to urge your support for our funding request that would ensure our coastal hospitals are equipped to withstand and respond to disasters that could interrupt the water and fuel supplies needed to maintain operations and patient care services.

As you know, Oregon's coast is at high risk of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and subsequent tsunami. When—not if—this happens, our hospitals and clinics must be prepared to operate independently for weeks. The reality is stark: roadways will be impassable, supply chains will be disrupted, and emergency responders will be stretched thin. Without a reliable two-week supply of fuel and water, our ability to provide life-saving care will be crippled.

We need only look at recent global and local disasters to understand the stakes. In 2011, Japan's Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami devastated communities, cutting off medical services for weeks. Less than three years ago, Hurricane Ian in Florida left hospitals without power and forced emergency evacuations. Here in Oregon, recent winter storms and wildfires have already demonstrated how fragile our infrastructure is—imagine the catastrophic impact of a tsunami on our coastal communities.

We have witnessed firsthand the challenges of emergency preparedness. During the 2021 ice storm, our facilities struggled to maintain operations as power outages and supply disruptions placed immense strain on our community. The lesson was clear: without advanced planning and dedicated resources, we cannot ensure continuity of care and be that essential facility resource for our citizens.

State funding is necessary to help with these expensive infrastructure costs.

First, the infrastructure needed is costly and not reimbursable through medical claims.

- For example, North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City is focused on providing a four-week supply of potable water. Lincoln City owns and operates the existing water utility system that SNLH uses. Much of the city's existing water supply, treatment, storage, and distribution systems were installed prior to the implementation of design standards that consider natural disasters, including seismic resiliency.

- For Pacific Communities Hospital in Newport, storage of at least a four-week supply of fuel is needed for continued operations during an emergency.

Second, the benefit of is not solely for hospitals—it is about protecting Oregon’s entire coastal economy. Our coastal communities, which depend heavily on tourism, will be ground zero for a tsunami disaster. Thousands of visitors will be caught in the aftermath, in need of urgent medical care. Without proper preparation, a disaster could turn into an irreversible economic collapse for towns that rely on hospitality and small businesses.

We know there is uncertainty in the budget, we also know that that it is only a matter of time before a significant disaster could occur that would require vital storage of fuel and water. We hope you would consider prioritizing funds to help prepare and preserve our coastal hospitals.

Thank you for your time.

Lesley Ogden, MD, CEO
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