



April 24, 2025

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jason Werts and I am the President & CEO at Rivermark Community Credit Union, serving nearly 180,000. We are headquartered in Oregon City, Oregon and have been serving the State of Oregon and Southwest Washington since 1951.

I am writing to register my strong opposition to SB 781, which would require credit unions to pay state taxes on loans and services provided to businesses when a bank chooses to sell assets to a local, not-for-profit financial cooperative.

Credit unions play a vital role in providing affordable and accessible financial services to Oregonians, particularly in underserved communities. If credit unions are disincentivized from considering the purchase of bank assets, consumers may face reduced access to financial services. Fewer options could lead to higher fees, less personalized service, and diminished financial inclusion, particularly in rural areas where credit unions are often the only financial option.

In 2023, Rivermark alone delivered \$23.3 million in direct financial benefit to our members. This was the result of better deposit rates, lower loan rates, and lower fees. As a result of the work that Rivermark performs, 1,420 jobs in our community were directly supported. Finally, we made nearly \$1 million in contributions to non-profit organizations serving our local communities, with an emphasis on fighting hunger, housing instability, and supporting children's health. This impact is much greater when you account for all of Oregon's credit unions.

It is important to note that very few banks sell to credit unions (less than 4% of total bank acquisitions involved a credit union between 2012 and 2024). Credit unions are not actively seeking these types of acquisitions but rather are usually approached by the banks, who are looking for the best return for their shareholders. When a credit union is selected as a buyer, it is because it not only offers the most value but because credit unions are often the only ones willing to keep services going, particularly in rural and low-income areas. Because this bill will discourage any credit union involvement going forward, this could mean fewer places for people to get loans, open accounts, or manage their money. In other words, this could result in an increased number of banking deserts across the State of Oregon.

This proposed bill goes against Oregon's values. Our State has always supported local, community-based solutions, and credit unions have been an important part of this tradition. This bill would create barriers to access to financial services and there is no clear benefit to our economy or many Oregonians. At the same time, there is no evidence that this bill will help our economy or bring in significant new revenue.

Rivermark Community Credit Union is not actively seeking to acquire a bank, nor has any plans in the future. However, SB 781 would appear to make our commitment to financial inclusion and access to the communities we serve more difficult. Please vote no on SB 781 so we can keep financial services accessible, especially for those people and places that need them most.



Sincerely,

Jason Werts
President & Chief Executive Officer
Rivermark Community Credit Union