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May 6, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street Northeast
Salem, Oregon, 97301

Re: Funding for the Osborn-Aquatic Center

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Nosse and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Benton County, we urge you to fund the capital request from Senator Sara Gelser Blouin and Representative Sarah Finger McDonald regarding Osborn Aquatic Center.

Osborn Aquatic Center is owned by the Corvallis School District and operated by the City of Corvallis and has grown into a regional resource that serves all of Benton County and beyond. While we will let others speak about the importance of Osborn to communities beyond Benton County, we can speak to the importance of the facility to our community.

The City and the School District have been good stewards of the building, and this critical flaw, which was found during a routine inspection, was not the result of deferred maintenance from an indifferent public body. The people of Benton County, not just Corvallis, heavily utilize the facility for exercise classes, swim training, and all-around recreation. Corvallis voters renewed a levy in November 2023 with 66.5% approval that continued to fund parks, our regional library system, and the aquatic center.

This is a beloved facility that brings in economic opportunities for surrounding restaurants and stores, as people who leave their swim meets, classes, or recreation seek food, groceries, or other shopping in the area.

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As local governments see funding constraints based on Measures 5 and 50, and with the funding constraints on public schools, public amenities like Osborn are difficult to keep solvent. The City and School District found a balance for this local gem; but this massive, unexpected cost is preventing that balance from functioning and has rallied residents to support the center.

We ask you for your support and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Nancy Wyse
Chair



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Vice Chair



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