

Submitter: Rob Birdwell
On Behalf Of: Osborn Aquatic Center
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5531

Dear Gentlepersons,

I'm advocating for adequate and timely funding to be made available for Osborn Aquatic Center in Corvallis, Oregon, specifically to fund the structural repairs to the roof needed in order to re-open the facility. I am a long-time patron, participating in various classes, recreation activities, lap swimming, as well as participating in US Masters Swimming meets which Osborn has hosted.

Osborn features an Olympic size pool - 50 meters long, with a bulkhead for flexible use to divide the pool as needed for various other sports/activities. Olympic champions have competed in this pool as do everyday folks of all ages and abilities.

I would like to share some key points that I believe make Osborn Aquatic Center so vital to our community, county, and our state:

Employment: the facility employs lifeguards, swim instructors, and a variety of other administrative and support jobs. These are important jobs, particularly for young people. As a former lifeguard and swim instructor myself, I can't emphasize enough how important these types of jobs are for young people, by giving them valuable work experience, responsibility, and providing them skills that they will use the rest of their lives

Community: Osborn brings the people in our community together by providing a safe place to gather, swim, learn, play, relax, and enjoy. People of all walks of life, of all ages, come to experience Osborn's impressive facilities for their health, well-being, and pleasure. My children learned to swim there and being a patron myself I have been witness to the amazing staff and the wide variety of events offerings hosted by the facility that benefit so many.

Impact: Osborn Aquatic Center's impact on our state, county, and community can be quantified in many ways - but it's more than just economic. Yes, events like swim meets, water polo matches, swim lessons, training for swim instructors, memberships, et al, do have a monetary impact on our community. These events/activities bring folks to town, fill up hotels, get people out to restaurants and shopping, etc. These are all measurable and have an impact on our community. But with Osborn closed there's a tremendous loss to our community - and not just economically. The loss of a place to learn to swim; the loss of a place to engage in

physical therapy; the of a place for high school and other kids to train, and more.

This humble letter only touches on a few key points and are from my own perspective in support of Osborn. But as an adult competitive swimmer (US Masters); as survivor of surgeries where water therapy played a vital role in my recovery; as a former lifeguard, swim instructor and swim coach; as a parent and now grand parent who has witnessed the joys of children learning to be safe in the water and develop skills that will last them a lifetime; as a witness to the wonderful staff who do their jobs with professionalism and pride; as a witness to people of all ages and abilities enjoying the facility - yes, all this and more, I speak out strongly in support of Osborn Aquatic Center, its need for timely funding, and timely repair so that it may resume its place in our community, county, and state to employ, engage, and benefit all who want to enjoy everything it has to offer.

Sincerely,

Rob Birdwell
Corvallis, Oregon
May 8, 2025