

Submitter: Sarah Chaney

On Behalf of: Corvallis residents

Topic: SB5531

Dear Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

I'm writing in support of SB5531 -- the Osborn Aquatic Center funding request.

I moved back to Corvallis in 2008 and had been swimming regularly at Osborne until it closed last fall. Over the years I've met and made friends with many people, whose health and well-being have been compromised since last fall by not being able to swim for exercise. Those who don't swim for exercise probably can't understand how essential getting in the water is for quality of life. Swimming is my water therapy in more ways than one. Some might say that there are other pools in town, so what's the problem? Yes, there are 2 other pools I know of in Corvallis – one is on campus at OSU, and available if a person is/was affiliated with OSU as an employee, and can pay the fee. The other is in a private health club that is expensive. I taught briefly as adjunct faculty at OSU so that I have been able to swim at OSU. It's inconvenient and more expensive than Osborne, but it is how I have kept fit. I have neuropathy in my feet, which keeps me from being able to go on walks on pavement, or on long hikes. Swimming is my main option for exercise. I also need to be able to swim inside to stay out of the sun because of issues with skin cancer. Osborn Aquatic Center has been a mainstay for me.

I know other swimmers for whom swimming is the only option for exercise and Osborn Aquatic Center is the only place they can swim because of limited income or mobility. One suffers from long-term effects from a concussion, and swimming is her only option for safe exercise. Some can drive to Albany to access the YMCA, but others, like my friend with the concussion, or an amputee, or a blind woman who swam occasionally at Osborne, can't.

Osborn Aquatic Center is a critical source of physical, mental, social, and emotional well being for the people of Corvallis and the region. One way the Center serves the community hasn't been mentioned in other testimony is: in the summer it serves as an indoor cooling center when temperatures are high. In the winter, it is a warm place for people to come and read or do homework at the table in the large lobby area.

We pay levies and taxes to support Osborne Aquatic Center and now we need the funding to fix this wonderful facility. Please help our community get back on track with swimming lessons, fitness for adults, recreation and serving people with needs that can't be met anywhere else in town.

Thank you.