

RE: Funding Request for Critical Repairs at Osborn Aquatic Center, Corvallis, OR

I am writing in support for a \$4 million state lottery fund allocation to address urgent repairs at the Osborn Aquatic Center in Corvallis, Oregon. This facility—vital to public safety, youth development, regional recreation, and economic vitality—was forced to close its natatorium on October 2, 2024, after routine maintenance revealed significant rust and corrosion on the steel roof support beams.

The Osborn Aquatic Center is one of only two indoor facilities in Oregon capable of hosting long course swimming competitions and water polo championships at all levels—from youth to senior, adaptive to elite athletes. It is a cornerstone venue for OSAA high school district and state championships for swimming and water polo, serving students from 3A to 5A districts. Its central location in Corvallis ensures accessibility from across the state, making it a uniquely critical resource for Oregonians.

This closure is having a profound impact. From a state perspective:

- It reduces Oregon's already limited capacity for hosting large-scale aquatic competitions.
- It jeopardizes inclusive access to adaptive and therapeutic aquatic programming.
- It eliminates one of the safest indoor aquatic spaces available for teaching water safety—a life-saving priority in a state defined by rivers and ocean shorelines.

From a local perspective:

- Osborn hosts over 700 swim lessons per week, teaching vital water safety skills to children and adults.
- Its events contribute an estimated \$1.5 million annually to the Corvallis economy.
- It employs more than 100 hourly workers, many of whom are local high school and college students.
- It supports a wide array of community groups—from ROTC drills to scout badge certifications, scuba training, and even underwater hockey.
- It includes a warm-water pool that is essential for therapy and early childhood aquatic comfort.

On a personal note, my daughter spent several formative years taking swim lessons at Osborn. That foundation not only taught her essential water safety skills but also fostered a love for the sport. She is now a competitive swimmer on the Corvallis Aquatic Team, a program that has also been directly impacted by the facility's closure. Osborn has been instrumental in her development, and it is heartbreaking to see such a vital resource for so many young athletes and families shuttered indefinitely.

Osborn's closure has caused widespread disruption. The needed repairs are extensive but achievable with support. Without them, the Osborn Aquatic Center's ability to serve thousands of Oregonians and continue generating economic, social, and public health benefits is at risk.

We urge you to champion a \$4 million funding allocation to restore this essential community asset. Investing in Osborn is an investment in youth opportunity, statewide competition infrastructure, public safety, and equitable recreation access.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to the well-being of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,
Charla Staggs