

Submitter: Beth Rowan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Capital Construction

Measure, Appointment or SB5531
Topic:

I moved to Corvallis in August 2024. It was a huge delight to find out that the town had such an amazing indoor / outdoor swimming facility - the Osborn Aquatic Center. We had recently moved from Central California and my kids have grown up swimming. My 13-year-old son has been on a swim team since he was 7. I signed him up to join the Corvallis Aquatic Team. I scored a major parenting triumph by getting my daughter signed up for swim lessons at the exact same time as my son's swim practices at Osborn. After school activities are always so hectic, so being able to have both kids in an activity at the same place at the same time is a highly sought-after goal. Sadly, just as the team was beginning their 2024-2025 season, corrosion in the roof structure was discovered during routine maintenance, leading to the closure of the facility. There were no more swim lessons for my daughter and my son's team had to relocate their practices on a day-by-day basis. Sometimes they could only get time at a pool that's a half an hour away (meaning a 1-hour round trip that I, as a new assistant professor trying to build up my research program, didn't have in my time budget). Since we were new, we didn't know any other families well enough to carpool. As the months stretched into winter, the team was able to find practice pools closer in town, but they were not always indoor facilities.

I am sharing my personal story here because I think that my experience speaks to what Osborn has brought to the community of Corvallis. I know that not only my son's swim team, but also the high school swim teams practice there. Hundreds of other kids were doing swimming lessons there. It is also a nice indoor space for low-impact recreation in the winter months. It is hugely important for the fitness and well-being of the community. However, repairing the Osborn Aquatic Center will bring benefits that stretch far beyond the Corvallis city limits. It is one of only two indoor facilities with a long-course pool that can hold large competition events in Oregon. It is centrally located within the state, meaning easier travel for a lot of teams coming to participate in competition events. It is also only one of a few facilities that offers adaptive swimming. Building a second facility somewhere else would cost a lot more money. It is more cost effective to repair this facility.

Please consider supporting this bill. Our Corvallis community and swimmer athletes around the state will thank you!