

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

My name is Rhonda Soulé. I am a Corvallis resident and I am writing to express my support for Osborn Aquatic Center Corvallis and its funding request for necessary repairs to reopen the facility.

I have spent almost my entire life in Benton County – I was born in Corvallis and raised in Philomath, and after several years away, returned to Corvallis in 1990 to start my family. Some of my earliest memories – and most of my fondest memories of my childhood - involve swimming and swimming pools. I learned to swim and participated on swim teams throughout my childhood at the Philomath pool, and distinctly remember competing at Osborn Aquatic Center in a high school district meet shortly in February of 1980 – shortly after it opened – and how exciting it was. My four children learned to swim at Osborn, and three of them have and continue to benefit immensely from swim team participation and employment opportunities at the facility well into young adulthood. I have personally been involved as an adult with competitive swimming since 2005, serving as Business Manager of the Corvallis Aquatic Team (CAT) and extensively as a volunteer – including board member of CAT and of Oregon Swimming, as a USA Swimming official, and as meet director for multiple organizations.

It is my meet director experience that I wish to draw on to share the far-reaching effects of Osborn Aquatic Center and how it benefits not only our community, but the state of Oregon and the entire western region of the US. In the past 10-15 years alone, Osborn has hosted swimming competitions including:

- 4-5 large weekend-long USA Swimming-sanctioned meets each year - plus 3-4 smaller one-day meets - each bringing in hundreds of club swimmers and their families from around the state and neighboring states
- Oregon Swimming championships - involving 550-600 club swimming athletes and their supporters from around Oregon and SW Washington each year
- 9-10 high school meets per year - district championships, invitationals, and dual meets for OSAA high school competitors from the entire west side of the state and central Oregon
- The Northwest Region YMCA Swimming Championships, which involve 500-600 swimmers from 20-25 Y teams from 6 western states
- The Northwest Conference Men's and Women's Swimming Championship – NCAA Division III colleges and universities from Oregon and Washington
- The Oregon Masters Association Champs – Championship meet for adult

swimmers ages 18+ from Oregon and SW Washington

- Oregon Senior Games swimming competition – an Olympic-style competition held annually in Corvallis, involving 12-14 sports for adults ages 50+.
- Special Olympics of Oregon – annual regional swimming competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.
- Water polo competitions and championships for high school and collegiate club teams from around Oregon.

We are fortunate in Corvallis to have a gem of a facility in our community available to us for recreation, fitness, competition, and social gatherings. But the impacts of the closure of this facility reach much further than that. Allocation of these state funds would allow Osborn to begin construction on the necessary repairs and updates to our facility which would continue to bring thousands of visitors to Corvallis annually for years to come. Thank you for your consideration of our funding request.

Rhonda Soulé