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Within our growing, diverse community, we sow the seeds of opportunities to raise prepared, resilient students.

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham, and Members of the House Committee on Rules,

My name is Dandy Stevens, Superintendent of the Gervais School District and President of the Oregon Small Schools Association.

I'm here today to express deep concerns about HB 3881 and the potential changes to the OSCIM bond matching program. My husband has owned a small, local construction company in Oregon City for more than 25 years and while I strongly support efforts to provide good, family-wage construction jobs, this bill could unintentionally harm small, rural school districts like mine.

In spring 2024, Gervais passed its first school bond in over 30 years—after eight failed attempts. The OSCIM grant played a crucial role by lowering the financial burden on our taxpayers, making the bond feasible. Our community supported the bond because we promised to keep as much of the work local as possible, helping both our students and our economy.

However, HB 3881 introduces new apprenticeship requirements that many of our local contractors simply can't meet. We haven't even broken ground yet, and rising costs are already forcing me to scale back our plans. If these new rules go into effect in 2026, it adds uncertainty and likely more costs—jeopardizing our ability to deliver on the promise we made to voters. It is mission critical for this bond project to meet the expectations and maintain the trust of the voters.

As President of the Oregon Small Schools Association, which represents about 66% of the school districts in Oregon, I hear the same concern from districts across the state, especially outside the I-5 corridor. These districts rely on local contractors, who often don't have access to registered apprenticeship programs. Requiring them to meet the same standards as large, state-funded projects risks cutting them out entirely.

We support expanding CTE and apprenticeship pathways, and we're eager to partner with the trades to do that. But HB 3881, as written, threatens our ability to access critical OSCIM funds and complete long-overdue construction projects in Oregon's least affluent and most rural communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.