



UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Paul Anderes, Commissioner
R. Matthew Scarfo, Commissioner
Jake Seavert, Commissioner

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer

1106 K. Avenue | La Grande, Oregon 97850

Phone: (541) 963-1001 | Fax (541) 963-1079

February 13, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 5071

Good afternoon Co-Chairs and members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee. For the record, my name is Jake Seavert, Union County Commissioner. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here in support of funding for a DaVinci Robotic Surgery System at Grande Ronde Hospital.

Grande Ronde Hospital, located in La Grande, serves as a critical healthcare hub for residents across Union County and neighboring rural communities. Funding this request would help ensure that a small rural frontier hospital can maintain modern surgical technology, which is increasingly essential for recruiting and retaining highly trained surgeons. Many recent medical school graduates and residency-trained physicians are now educated using robotic-assisted surgical systems and seek opportunities to practice in facilities equipped with this technology.

Robotic-assisted surgery represents the direction modern medicine is heading, allowing surgeons to perform highly precise procedures either onsite or remotely. This capability also creates opportunities for specialized experts to assist with complex surgeries without requiring patients or physicians to travel long distances — a significant benefit for rural communities.

An additional advantage of this technology is improved patient outcomes, including shorter recovery times and enhanced surgical precision that contributes to increased patient safety.

This funding request is not simply a want, but a critical need for sustaining advanced healthcare services in rural Eastern Oregon. Grande Ronde Hospital has already secured half of the required funding and is seeking state support to complete the remaining \$3.7 million investment.

In closing, I respectfully urge your support for funding the DaVinci Robotic Surgery System. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jake Seavert
Commissioner