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Dear Joint Ways and Means Capital Construction committee,

I am Dr. David Lewis, assistant professor of Anthropology and Indigenous studies at OSU. I am a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, a descendant of the Santiam Kalapuya, Chinook and Takelma peoples of Oregon. I work in areas of ethnographic history, researching the tribal histories from western Oregon, bringing clarity to histories which have not been well researched. I recently publish a book, Tribal Histories of The Willamette Valley (Ooligan Press, 2023), which features stories of settlement and removal of the tribes from the valley.

I am pleased to be working with the McKenzie River Discovery Center for the past two and a half years as a researcher and consultant, verifying, collecting and sharing Native American histories of the McKenzie Valley, a place where such information has been somewhat sparse. I appreciate MRDC's interest in our culture as a part of the complete story in the McKenzie and upper Willamette River regions. Working with members of the MRDC committee I have consulted on films, exhibits, collections, and the impending opening of the center in 2026.

I believe the Center will serve as a draw for tourists to the upper McKenzie River and as a cultural center for the upper McKenzie communities. I have already met with many residents of the area, and they are excited to get more of their history told. In addition, I believe the center will serve as a hub of inspiration for artists and scholars who want to understand and study the region further. There is still much to be learned about the hydrology, geology, and ecology of the upper McKenzie. My research has already revealed a rich history of Tribes visiting the basin and fishing there, and it is information like this that will be interpreted at the center. I fully support the mission of the center and hope they will continue to get support from the state through SB 5702 in this vital and worthwhile community project.

Sincerely,

David G. Lewis, PhD