



June 7, 2015

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Human Services
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Sen. Bates, Rep. Nathanson, and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of SB 606. I am a citizen advocate for improved oral health in our community, and for finding solutions that bring those in opposition and in support of water fluoridation together for a shared common goal of improved oral health. This Dental Pilot Project and HB 2024 have the ability to reduce barriers to dental access, especially for our most vulnerable citizens.

The intention of SB 606 is to extend the sunset date of the Dental Pilot Project established by SB 738 (2011). The 2011 legislation permitted OHA to approve a dental project subject to available funding. However, it was not until the 2014 legislative session that one time funding of \$100,000 was approved from the General Fund and appropriated to OHA to begin working on this project. Between September of 2014 and March of 2015, the Dental Pilot Program Coordinator convened many stakeholder meetings and this project is currently accepting applications and moving forward with large consensus.

While I would personally support elimination of the sunset date altogether for this pilot, I do understand that SB 738 was negotiated in good faith between diverse stakeholders. I therefore support an extension of the sunset date. Such an extension will allow adequate time for data collection, and reporting. It will also support the many years of effort and collaboration that has already occurred, and allow completion of such a study. The strength of such a pilot project is that it allows unique approaches and strategies to be studied around the topic of dental workforce. Ultimately this will lead to improved oral health outcomes in the community, and allows such a minimal fiscal administrative cost to be negated by improved oral health outcomes for our citizens.

However there is currently no funding for the program included in the 2015-2017 budget. For OHA to be able to have this program remain operational, the agency would require two permanent positions, one full time dental pilot coordinator, and one part time research analyst. OHA estimates the administrative cost for this program to be \$262, 084 General Fund per biennium.

It is my belief that such a pilot project allows innovation, and new strategies for improved oral health in our community. I encourage your favorable vote for SB 606.

Kind regards,

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