



City of Prineville

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February 23, 2017

House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce
Representative Jeff Reardon, Chair
900 Court Street NE, Room 431
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for HB 2782 – Full Funding of OSU-Cascades Expansion

Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee:

The City of Prineville City Council considered and approved support for this effort on February 14, 2017.

As Mayor, I am writing to request your strong support for House 2782 and fully funding the planned expansion of OSU-Cascades. HB 2782 calls for the Oregon Legislature to dedicate \$69.5 million for the next phase of the campus expansion, which is the amount recommended by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. This funding is needed to ensure that as the student population continues to grow, campus capacity grows with it.

Central Oregon is what is considered an “education desert” meaning that it is comparatively lacking in higher education opportunities as compared with other regions of the state. The next closest university is OSU in Corvallis, a nearly three-hour drive away. Studies show that the majority of public university students attend college within 50 miles of where they live and that traveling away from home costs an average of \$12,000 per year. Many of our students simply can’t afford that, meaning that without OSU-C they wouldn’t have the opportunity to attend college and pursue a four-year degree at all.

Our community stands to benefit from the growth of OSU-Cascades. It will provide educational opportunities for our high school graduates who seek to remain in the area and for working adults across the region who seek to further their education. Moreover, an education at OSU-C will better prepare them for successful careers in our own community by providing skills tailored to regional economic needs. That in turn, boosts the economic health of the region. OSU-C has been working actively with both established and emerging industries to ensure not just a well-rounded education, but ready-made workers for our growing economy.

This organization is an Equal Opportunity Provider

OSU-Cascades is the first public university built in Oregon in more than half a century, and rarely does a single project hold so much potential for an entire region of the state. We've been thrilled with the campus's progress to date, and hope that you will provide the full funding needed for the campus to keep pace with the growing demand.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betty Roppe, Mayor". The signature is written in a cursive style with large, flowing letters.

Mayor Betty Roppe
City of Prineville