

February 16, 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:

You have the opportunity to invest in prosperity for people east of the Cascades by supporting HB 2782, authorizing \$69.5 million in state bonds to support the expansion of OSU-Cascades. This funding will allow the continued growth of the only 4-year university in fast-growing Central Oregon and, over time, make Central and Eastern Oregon self-supporting instead of a drag on the whole Oregon economy. This is truly an investment in the future of the State of Oregon.

My wife and I own Silvies Valley Ranch, just east of Bend. We have invested in ecological restoration and have demonstrated that improvement of fish and wildlife habitat will also improve the productivity of working cattle ranches. We are also investing in ecotourism to demonstrate that ecologically sound practices can attract visitors who support the service economy of local towns. In all of our endeavors, we have benefitted from the research and extension of Oregon State University's excellent programs.

As long-time residents of Frontier Oregon, we know how distance from higher education can be a deterrent in the college-going culture of our region. Our parents, my wife and I, and our kids, all went to college in the Willamette Valley – it is a significant hardship that many cannot manage. Not only is it significantly more expensive to leave home and pay room and board at a distant university, for some rural students, crossing the mountains to go to a large school in the Valley isn't a choice they will make. If we are going to improve the educational attainment in our rural areas, we must increase capacity at OSU-Cascades.

OSU-Cascades is growing faster than any other public university in the state, which is a reflection of the underserved nature of our region. They are serving almost entirely Oregon residents, and are deserving of state support for their expansion. With capacity to be reached in 2020, the state must provide bonds in this legislative session in order to have the next academic building in place by 2021.

Opportunities for economic development and prosperity are limited in Frontier Oregon, but higher education is often the key for providing the knowledge and skills to succeed in our local industries. Expansion of OSU-Cascades will make higher education accessible for our students, and will extend the research needed for our economy to develop and grow.

We are supporting the OSU expansion and programs personally, and we urge you to support HB 2782 and invest state resources where they will have great impact.

Sincerely,

Scott D. Campbell, DVM
President

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