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**Testimony on SB 707 before the Senate Veterans and Emergency  
Preparedness Committee**

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**My name is Gary Wilhelms – formerly honorable. I live in unincorporated Washington County. I'm here today representing the Oregon State Capitol Foundation of which I am a founding member and also myself since I've had some involvement in this project over the last eleven years or so.**

**SB 707 approves the bonding necessary to finance the project known as the Capitol Master Plan or, more recently, the Oregon State Capitol Renovation project. The main reason for the project, and the most significant cost item, is the seismic upgrade of the Capitol Building. The primary concern is life safety for those who work in and those who visit the building. However, in the interest of full disclosure, the plan does include some items that would be considered modernization, remodeling or upgrades to the 79-year-old building.**

**While there were earlier calls for individual items, the need for the overall project was really identified by the Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature back in 2005-6. The Wings were remodeled in 2007-8 without seismic upgrades. In 2008, the Legislature retained SRG Partnership, Inc. to develop the Oregon State Capitol Master Plan which included the seismic upgrades and other improvements to the entire building, both the wings and the 1938 building. The proposed project was developed during 2008-9 and presented to the Legislature in June of 2009. It then sat on the shelf until the legislature created the Capitol Master Plan Review Committee in 2012. This committee reviewed the original master plan, recommending a few amendments. Most significantly, it recommended a timeline and funding process to complete the project. It delivered its final report to the Legislature in February 2013.**

**In 2013, the Legislature approved thirty-four and a half million dollars in bonding to finance the design phase of the project. The design phase was largely completed, using about twenty-five of the thirty-four and a half million. Those of us with keen interest in the project were optimistic about getting approval in the 2015 Session for the \$300 million in bonding needed to complete the project.**

**It did not happen.**

**I'm not here to discuss the reasons why funding for the project was unsuccessful in 2015. I would, however, like to mention that the concern of legislators to fund the seismic rehabilitation of public schools before they do the Capitol Building is being met. As you will recall, \$175 million was set aside for the Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program and an additional \$125 million for matching funds to assist school districts with making improvements to aging facilities. I checked with Business Oregon, who administers the grant program. They did \$50 million in grants in 2016 and are doing an additional \$120 million in 2017. So the program is working, and, while it may take time, the concern for public schools is being met. I believe it is reasonable, therefore, for the Legislature to once again turn its attention to the Capitol Building.**

**During the 2015 Session, the Legislature did approve \$50 million for the Capitol Accessibility, Maintenance and Safety (CAMS) project which will complete some of the items found in the Capitol Master Plan. The CAMS project will be underway until 2019, and since, when the blanks are filled in,**

**SB 707 will likely be an ask in the range of \$250 to \$300 million, legislators just might not be eager to support it in 2017. However, legislators should be willing to step up because:**

- 1) The 79-year-old building needs the work – in terms of both public safety and restoration.**
- 2) The Capitol Building is the only building for which the Legislature has direct responsibility. The work is going to be done eventually. If it is not done now, then when is it going to be done? And how much more expensive is it going to be?**
- 3) There is currently sufficient General Obligation bonding authority available for the project.**
- 4) The design phase work has largely been completed ----- at considerable expense, I might add. This investment should not be wasted.**
- 5) The clock is ticking. According to the people with the expertise, it's not a question of whether, but rather a question of when a large earthquake is going to occur. The experts also say that this building cannot survive the "big one." So who is going to be in the building when**

**it happens, and what happens to them --- or should I say us? And what will it then cost us to rebuild the building?**

**This building and I are the same age. We both need rehabilitation. While I might be beyond help, this building is not. Please give SB 707 a chance.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.**

**If you have questions, I'll try to answer them.**