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Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Legislature

Re: Support for bill **SB 5505** to go towards renovation of Cordley Hall, a major research and instructional building at OSU

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey and Members of the Committee,

My name is Virginia Weis and I am a faculty member at Oregon State University. I wish to express my support for funds for the renovation of Cordley Hall, a major research and instructional building on campus. I have been an occupant of Cordley for 21 years and am deeply concerned about the condition of the building.

To provide some background, I will start with some metrics that describe the building and its occupants. Cordley Hall is the 3rd largest building on the OSU Corvallis campus, behind the library and Memorial Union. At approximately 235,000 square feet, it is the largest research building on campus. It was built in the 1950s and has never been renovated. The building is home to two of the campus's largest life sciences departments, both with nationally ranked, world-class research programs. These units bring in approximately 13-15% of all of the grant dollars to OSU, for example $9.8 million in FY16. Research carried out in the building includes studies of salmon populations, ocean acidification, potato blight, coral reef decline, epidemiology of human infectious disease, and pathology of forest ecosystems. The building houses valuable and important collections of plants and arthropods. The faculty housed in the building instruct approximately 24,000 students per year and many of the classes serving these students are taught in Cordley, including Human Anatomy and Physiology.

My colleagues and I are very concerned about the state of the building. There are numerous and clear threats to life safety including that absence of a sprinkler system and seismic upgrades. Controls for the HVAC system are so outdated that the system has to be manually turned on and off daily. Half of the building has no air conditioning. Constant water leaks from the roof and internal plumbing failures threaten the research and instructional enterprise.

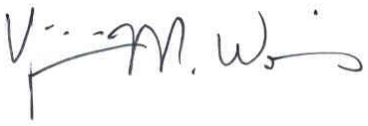
I will illustrate these threats with a few examples. (1) In summer, the Arthropod Collection of 3 million specimens, that serves as a resource to scientists worldwide, gets up to 100°on some days and in winter has tarps suspended over specimen cabinets to protect against water leaks. (2) We have had to build internal ceiling catchments in some rooms. For example, one has been installed in a room housing a new faculty member's state-of-the-art microscope valued at $500,000 that is in danger of being ruined by water leaks. (3) A lab of another new faculty was damaged by the failure of a bleeder valve in the steam system that sprayed 250° water into the lab – luckily when no one was present. (4) Aging cabinets in another lab, failed and tumbled from the wall, causing significant damage but – again – luckily hurting no one because a student working underneath them had left the room moments earlier.

I feel that we are at the point where our ability to attract and retain world-class faculty is in jeopardy. Some of our best, most promising faculty may leave because of the poor quality of the facility and recruiting new top-notch faculty is now a big challenge.

At present, we cannot guarantee the safety of the many faculty and researchers and thousands of students who occupy the building throughout the year. This presents enormous liability to OSU.

Upgrades to this facility are urgently needed. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



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