

RE: SB5505

May 12, 2017

Office of the Governor
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Governor Brown and Legislative Leaders,

As researchers, scientists, and Oregonians we write to encourage your full support of the University of Oregon's request for capital funding for the Phil and Penny Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact.

We are all excited by the University of Oregon's plans to build new science facilities and endow as many as 30 principal investigators. The impact that this investment will have on the research stature and capacity of the state is immense, including the potential to benefit researchers across the state (including us).

There is often dialogue in the public arena about the competition between Oregon's public universities; however, any serious investigation of this issue quickly dispels this notion. Significant collaborative efforts are routine among researchers at UO, OHSU, OSU and PSU. For example, analysis shows that 64 peer-reviewed publications have recently been authored jointly by UO and OHSU faculty. Likewise, the UO and OSU have partnered together to create the multimillion dollar NSF funded Center for Sustainable Materials Chemistry. Similar examples exist for all of the research institutions across the state. In fact, discoveries with the greatest scientific and social impact are only achievable when researchers from one institution or discipline share ideas, information, and data with others who can build on that work or enhance our current understanding of the world.

It is this type of cross-disciplinary and collaborative research that will flourish with the opening of the new UO Science Campus facilities. The collaborative work expected at the UO Science Campus will have direct impact on the entire State of Oregon.

Federal research activity generated by UO Science Campus faculty could generate a 30 percent increase in funding at the UO alone. We also believe that bringing these new faculty to Oregon will benefit other public universities' efforts to secure funding from both industry and federal agencies. It is clear that in the future, funding opportunities will rely more and more on regional solutions and partnerships. Overall, this initiative will deliver a high return on investment for us all.

At a time when federal investments in scientific research are in question, the Legislature's investment in the work at the University of Oregon will lay a bold claim on how the State of Oregon embraces science and its ability to impact human health and the environment. It will help our entire higher education system grow stronger and attract new research and entrepreneurial talent to our state.

As you work to finalize the state budget, please consider the unique financial tool you have in bonding to invest in this capital project. Your investment will pave the way to new research opportunities across our universities and new economic opportunities across our state. This initiative will transform our state and build on Oregon's legacy of innovation.

Please support and invest in this project.

Sincerely,

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