

**Testimony before the Joint Committee on Ways and Means (General Government)  
For The State Library of Oregon Budget SB 5518  
Ann Malkin, State Library Board Chair  
February 11, 2019**

Co-Chair Smith, Co-Chair Wagner, and members of the subcommittee, my name is Ann Malkin. I am the current chair of the State Library Board. I live in Bend, where I also serve as the chair of the elected Deschutes Public Library District Board. I am a second-generation native Oregonian, retired as the Director of Communications for Bend Research Inc., and have actively supported public libraries as a volunteer for more than 20 years.

I am here to testify on Senate Bill 5518, addressing the State Library of Oregon budget for the next biennium. I come before you representing the nine-member State Library Board, who were appointed by the governor and represent a broad range of stakeholders. We have board members from a variety of state agencies, including the Department of Education and Commission for the Blind, citizens, and librarians from academic, private-sector, and public libraries. We hail from all parts of the state, from tiny Summerville in Union County (population 135) to Portland, Independence, and Central Oregon. I'm proud to serve with these committed, knowledgeable Oregonians whose wide range of expertise, drawing from public and private sectors, ensures that we provide excellent oversight over the budget and activities of the State Library of Oregon.

As many of you may know, this has been a challenging year for the State Library. We have been without a State Librarian since last March and our board has been working to support the Governor in recruiting and selecting an outstanding leader for this crucial state agency.

What has been made particularly clear during this time of transition is the dedication and professionalism of the State Library staff, led our Interim State Librarian Caren Agata. Caren, her managers, and the staff have put in exemplary work as they continue in their efforts to provide superlative service to a wide array of stakeholder groups, to increase efficiency and reduce waste, to find innovative ways to partner with other state agencies and groups, and to continue their excellent support to libraries in every county throughout our state.

Few state agencies are charged with serving so many diverse groups. The State Library

- provides essential information and research support to state agencies and state legislators and their staffs;
- ensures quality and reduces waste through its oversight, mandated by the Legislature, of reference databases and electronic resources purchased by state agencies;
- provides a lifeline of books and connection to more than 5,300 blind, visually impaired, and physically handicapped Oregonians throughout the state through its Talking Books and Braille library;
- awards and administers crucial state and federal grants that spur improvement for all sizes of libraries;
- supports more than 1,700 public, academic, special, and tribal libraries, as well as providing support for citizens of our state who are struggling to reopen closed libraries; and
- funds early literacy programs and summer reading programs—the highlight of the summer for some of our youngest Oregonians—through administration of Ready To Ready funds.

As Caren has outlined, in 2015, the State Library was asked to make numerous changes as a result of House Bill 3523, expanding our agency mission and altering the composition of the board and the means for hiring the State Librarian.

Since that legislation passed, the State Library has embraced those new roles and changes, diving into new areas of responsibility and embracing the concepts put forth by the legislation.

The past biennium has been marked by significant accomplishments and innovation. A few highlights include the following.

- The State Library has provided state agencies with embedded librarians who can tailor reference services and training to meet those agencies' specific needs. These services are offered not only in Salem but at offices throughout the state, meeting state government employees where they work. These librarians don't just respond to reference requests, they act as "information partners," proactively suggesting resources and participating in research projects and legislative concept creation. The success of this approach is reflected in the increase in research transactions fulfilled by the State Library, which rose from about 7,000 in 2017 to more than 10,000 in 2018.
- The State Library has introduced and provided innovative training for new services like Safari, an online resource that provides books, case studies, and training modules in a variety of subjects, including leadership, project management, and technology skills. By sponsoring informational registration events at state agency worksites and conferences, the State Library already has enrolled nearly 2,000 state employees and usage is increasing steadily.
- The State Library has provided crucial, up-to-date information to nearly 2,000 state employees daily through its eClips service, which compiles news about state government from media sources throughout the state.
- The State Library has improved access to the services it offers to all Oregonians through a complete redesign and launch of the agency's website this fall.
- The State Library has installed a new sound booth that allows recording of audio resources for Oregon's blind and visually impaired citizens—particularly important since many vital resources are not offered in an audio format.
- The State Library has developed and deepened dozens of formal and informal partnerships inside and outside state government and participated in numerous events, such as the recent Diversity Conference.
- The State Library leveraged federal, state, and local funding to provide maximum benefits to Oregon libraries, including more than \$2 million in allocations from the federal Library Service and Technology Act, also known as LSTA. The State Library has streamlined grant processes in the administration of LSTA grant funds and awarded 15 grants for programs at libraries of all sizes and consortia throughout the state. This year's project of the year made it possible for the Springfield Public Library to implement a model program that enabled library cards to be issued to schoolchildren who live in areas that do not have library service.
- In 2018, the State Library awarded grants to 133 of 134 public libraries in the state for the Ready to Read grant program. Every \$1 in grant funding last year was leveraged by an average of \$1.88 in community support. The State Library thanks the Legislature for continuing to fund this essential program, which touches every child in the state.

The board supports the State Library leadership and staff in the innovative organizational development and achievements of the past biennium and in fostering a cooperative environment among staff and agency partners. We look forward to continuing to meet the needs and expectations of the Legislature for increased efficiency through technology and partnerships. Thank you for your kind attention.