

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the State Bill 5555 on the budget as the Director of the Malheur County Health Department. I support the effort to fund an additional Oregon State Public Health Lab (OSPHL) in Eastern Oregon. This last year has shown us how vital the OSPHL is and their work has been critical to public health and our response to COVID-19. We should use this opportunity to prepare for the future and the continually increasing need for OSPHL services for such a geographically large state. An additional OSPHL location would bring expertise, a variety of skilled jobs, and new industry to Eastern Oregon while providing more regional support to public health at the same time. This budget priority falls under several areas of Governor Brown's 10 Point Economic Plan, released March 23, 2021. Under Action #3, the OSPHL Eastern Oregon location would support local government in planning and growth. Under Action #5, the OSPHL Eastern Oregon location would provide upskill/reskill opportunities to move individuals out of poverty. Under Action #3, the OSPHL Eastern Oregon location would support local government in planning and growth. Under Action #10, the OSPHL Eastern Oregon location would support inclusive innovation and entrepreneurial development by targeting rural skilled workers who have little job opportunity in Eastern Oregon. The OSPHL should expand and provide more equity and opportunity by locating in Eastern Oregon, supported by the state budget. Thank you for your consideration.