

Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, and Rayfield, and members of the Committee:

My name is Toni Hockema. My family and I own and operate the oldest family run business in Oregon. Our Toledo Feed and Seed store was started by my Mom and Dad in 1953, and has been serving the farm and gardening supply needs of Lincoln County for 68 years.

I am writing this testimony in support of state funding to renovate the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center because this pool and community gathering place has been extremely important to me, my family, and the residents of East Lincoln County. I was on the first Toledo swim team in the 1960s. When I discovered that the City of Toledo was planning to close the pool, I contacted other members of that first swim team, and we joined with many community members determined to Keep Our Pool Open! Here's what happened.

The Community Support for this Project is Perhaps its Greatest Strength.

In 2016, the City of Toledo determined that it could no longer afford the cost of operating and maintaining the pool. The City Council voted to close it – unless the community could come up with a way to save it. Over 240 citizens signed petitions supporting the pool, and a formal petition was presented to the County Commissioners to establish the Greater Toledo Pool Recreation District, and to levy a property tax of \$0.77/thousand for the permanent operation and maintenance of the pool. In 2017, the citizens of Toledo and rural East Lincoln County voted to approve the District and the property tax. Our entire community definitely supports this important resource. WE VOTED OUR SUPPORT!

Forty citizens formed the Keep Our Pool Open (KOPO) campaign committee, received donations for a great campaign and spread the word about the vote. (My Toledo Feed and Seed store served as a hub for the campaign fundraising.) We went door-to-door (even in the rural areas), sent mailings, made phone calls, wrote letters of support for the Voters Pamphlet, recorded video testimonials for our website, and marched in the Toledo Summer Festival parade. We held free swim parties at the pool, and families were lined up for an entire block to get in. Community members valued this health, fitness, and social center that had taught swimming to several generations. The campaign was a community celebration of the pool!

Many of the campaign committee members now belong to the "Friends of the Greater Toledo Pool" and are providing support to the Greater Toledo Pool Recreation District Board of Directors. They maintain an account for the pool with the non-profit Toledo Community Foundation, have raised funds for the renovation Master Plan, and are helping with grant writing and community outreach.

If a high level of community support is a factor in determining your support of projects for state funding, you have found it in the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center project. This community values this pool, and we consider it essential to our health, well-being, and quality of life. Our facility must be renovated, and we are looking to you to assist with the funding required to Keep Our Pool Open for future generations.

Thank you,

Toni Hockema