

Co-Chair Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Vice Chair Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod, Co-Vice Chair Representative David Gomberg, Co-Vice Chair Representative Greg Smith and Members of the Committee:

My name is Cynthia Condon. I am from Salem. I provide testimony today in support of funding from the General Fund for THE GREATER TOLEDO AQUATIC AND COMMUNITY CENTER.

I know the impact such a resource can have for a lifetime. I grew up in Toledo, Oregon, once described as a hurly-burly mill town built on a hillside. I am the product of an idyllic childhood and the Toledo swimming pool and surrounding park played huge parts of that childhood. The pool was where I learned the meaning and value of community, hard work, competitive spirit, good sportsmanship, relationships, and great memories. I am still amazed at the impact my Toledo pool experiences have had on my life. My first exposure to competition and cooperation was with the Toledo Swim Team as a 6 & under swimmer. I continued to compete with the team for the next 12 years building my confidence along the way. Sixty years later, I still dread that first dive into any pool for lap swim because the Toledo pool was so cold for 7:30 am swim practice. My first job was teaching swim lessons to young children giving them a skill to last a lifetime. I then moved on to lifeguard at the pool until I graduated and used my hard-earned savings for college. I learned what it takes to operate a community resource, including volunteers, and learned the skill to step up and pitch in to do what needs to be done to keep things running safely: clean showers, toilets, dressing rooms, the pool deck, and cater to the array of citizens taking advantage of that great community pool.

A community pool and center, especially in a small town, provides a safe environment to meet, learn about, work and play with others of different backgrounds, income, education, religion, etc. When you dress down and jump into a pool, much of the veneer of our differences gives way to how similar we are...just people enjoying what the pool has to offer, a place to have fun, exercise, make friends learn new skills.

I no longer live in Toledo, but it still has a hold on me. The funds available from the American Recovery Act present an incredible opportunity to build up small rural community resources to revitalize infrastructure which can provide the backbone of greater community spirit. These resources offer Oregonians opportunities for education, recreation, jobs and pride. Many small rural communities, especially those which have experienced economic decline, cannot afford capital intensive projects like swimming pools without greater public support. Swimming pools are expensive, but incredibly valuable. Residents within the greater Toledo area have taken huge steps to save their community pool; including the formation of a new tax district, choosing to tax themselves for on-going maintenance and operations. Something tells me that's not too common these days. The greater Toledo community is not asking for a hand-out. The people are invested. They are asking for vital help to leverage their own investments for the greatest community benefit for generations to come.

I urge this committee and all legislators to support funding for THE GREATER TOLEDO AQUATIC AND COMMUNITY CENTER for a great rural Oregon community.

Sincerely,

Cynthia R. Condon
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