

Dear Chairs Girod and Holvey, and members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Steenkolk and I am the District Manager at the Greater Toledo Pool. I am writing in support of a Capital Construction grant for the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center. The funds are essential for the necessary renovations of this old pool and the addition of a community multipurpose room and fitness center.

I was born and raised here in Toledo some 40 years ago. After high school I went to college and never moved back. In returning to Toledo 3 years ago to take this position, I've noticed a lot has changed in the last 30 years. The hustle and bustle I remember Toledo having from my youth has been replaced with abandoned store fronts and vacant streets. When I began this job, I was quoted in the local paper saying, "We are not trying build a new pool. We are trying to rebuild a community." This revitalization project is exactly what the Toledo area needs to instill hope in residents, reminding them that they haven't been forgotten.

This pool is an area landmark, having the tank initially installed in the 1940s. It is the pool my 70+ year-old mother learned to swim in as well as my siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces, and now the next generation. With your consideration, families in this community will have the same opportunity I had growing up.

According to ESPN's Richard Lapchick, well-known African-American swimmer Sabir Muhammad says, "No one dies from not being able to play basketball." In other words, swimming is not just exercise; it is a life-saving skill.

Not only does the pool provide an opportunity to learn lifesaving skills through lessons, it provides competition in swim meets, a place for STEM students to test their rovers, a place for volunteer firefighters to practice water rescues, a supervised place for children to go after school while they wait for their parents to get off work, adaptive P.E. classes for the Lincoln County School District, a scuba certification location, kayak safety classes, water exercise classes for mature adults and social hub for both the young and old.

My community would really appreciate your consideration and support for the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center project that will have an impact for generations.

Sincerely,

Paul Steenkolk