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SB 55: Statewide Facility Assessment Senate Education Committee February 1, 2021

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and members of the committee, I am Jessica Ventura, Government Relations Director for the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 55.

In 2013, the Task Force on School Capital Improvement Planning estimated that there was \$7.6 billion in deferred maintenance in school facilities across the state. This figure was determined by reviewing 40 districts and then scaling up for the state, but this estimate did not provide detailed information on conditions.

Prior to COVID-19 many of us never imagined how critical it would be to have detailed information about HVAC systems, air filtration, internet connectivity, and classroom space. However, our current means of gathering school facility information cannot answer most of those questions. Instead through the hard work of our school districts we have gathered basic data about each facility in the state. However, we need professional assessments to be able to answer more detailed questions that can help respond to pandemics and better direct state school facility dollars.

While we are proud of the success the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program (OSCIM Program) has had in helping districts pass bonds, there is no way of determining which facilities in the state have the highest level of deferred maintenance. Without this knowledge, the OSCIM Program is not able to recommend targeted investments by the state that will ensure that all students have access to healthy, safe, and warm facilities.

Senate Bill 55 seeks to resolve this lack of information by implementing a Statewide Facilities Assessment. Facilities would be assessed via contracted services on an ongoing basis, with all facilities across the state being evaluated in a five year cycle. This would deliver a comprehensive set of school facilities data that is completely updated every 5 years. This means

better information to help the legislature and other decision makers target state investments to improve facilities in most need of repair. It will also clarify what is needed in terms of funding to improve facilities across the state or keep facilities at the same level.

As for the fiscal impact to ODE, the costs for the 2021-23 biennium would be \$3,233,488 for contract facility assessment work and an additional 1.0 FTE Program Analyst 3 as requested in the Governor's Recommended Budget for contract and data administration needs. As proposed in SB 55, the contract facility assessment work would be covered in whole by shifting a typically unused portion of the State School Fund Facilities Grant to the Office of School Facilities.

Thank you for your time, and we welcome any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Ventura
Government Relations Director