



ALEX CUYLER

Intergovernmental Relations Manager

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DATE: February 2, 2022
TO: Senate Committee on Health Care
FROM: Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager
RE: SB 1554, relating to public health preparedness

Dear Chair Patterson and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

The Lane County Board of Commissioners has reviewed SB 1554 and offers its support for the bill as introduced.

Lane County has long supported Legislative efforts to advance the functionality of local public health departments in both its state and federal advocacy. The Board of County Commissioners regularly convenes as the governing body of the Local Health Authority and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic has taken actions to ensure that Lane County's residents access to preventative measures is maximized. While hugely challenging during the pandemic, we continued to operate six primary care facilities and stayed on track with plans to open an seventh clinic to serve the residents of southern Lane County. Additionally, we quickly stood up a brand new facility provide local residents with housing challenges a place to safely quarantine during the pandemic.

Our relationship with the State's Health Authority and other State agencies was critical to ensuring service delivery and access to federal and state funding sources over the course of the last two years. We remain decidedly in full response mode due to the continued presence of the Omicron variant, so hesitate to characterize SB 1554 as an "after action report" but note that the value of this measure will be two reports that are delivered to the Legislature not later than November 15, 2022, and April 1, 2023. It is our assumption that these reports will inform future policy and fiscal actions that the Legislature can address during the 2023 session.

There have been a plethora of opinions expressed over the course of the past two years about how the country, and particularly government entities, responded to the pandemic. SB 1554 will ensure that Oregon's findings are compiled in a central set of documents, and this alone will be key to efforts we understand will occur at the federal level to ensure our nation is better prepared to act quickly when faced with future pandemics. As recently as last week, the Director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noted the fragmentation in the national public health system, and stated "we alone can't fix this".

SB 1554 will ensure Oregon's readiness to participate in those national conversations and we urge the Committee to move this bill to the floor of the Senate.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY ON BEHALF OF THE LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS