

Submitter: Kyle Gullickson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear Joint Ways & Means Committee of Oregon,

I urge you to invest in our communities now instead of putting more money into reserves.

The Budget Framework currently leaves out critical community-centered investments and policies that Oregonians need now. With historic levels saved—over \$2 billion—we have the means to rise to the challenges of the day.

We desperately need investments in mental health and addiction services! Our drug decriminalization measure could have been successful, if only the government hadn't dropped the ball on that one. The egregious, shoddy, uncoordinated way in which Measure 110 was implemented is a TRAGEDY and a DISGRACE.

To be fair, it probably wouldn't hurt to invest some of that bountiful reserve money in a sort of basic, bare bones framework/infrastructure system within which state, city, and county agencies can communicate more effectively than they currently do.

Carrier pigeons? Telegrams? Couriers to run messages from office to office, much like the "Cursus publicus" of Ancient Rome? A five-person team of interns/volunteers acting as accountability-focused human alarm clocks (e.g., reminding government employees of the tasks they must finish ASAP, hounding said employees to get their act together, documenting weak spots in the chain of communication between offices, etc.)? Truly, ANYTHING would be an improvement over how it is now. I've lived in Portland for 15 years and I have never been more embarrassed & ashamed of my city than when the decriminalization measure proved itself to be a poorly executed debacle. Honestly, I wouldn't be surprised if Portland's current houselessness crisis has been fueled by the botched rollout of Measure 110.

Obviously, we should be investing in affordable housing, but I'm certain y'all will receive plenty of public comments to that end, so I won't bother, other than to ask a rhetorical question: is there really a better time than now?

Additionally, Oregon needs to invest in recruiting, educating, and training a massive new wave of healthcare workers/providers as well as mental health professionals. Oregon's noticeable dearth of these valuable workers is only going to get worse unless serious efforts are made in that direction.

The Portland metro area also needs more charging stations where people can charge their EVs— we already know the future (for once!), so our coffers should be looking forward as well.

Last but **definitely** not least, money needs to be spent on accelerating the pace of fortifying our bridges against earthquakes, and retrofitting as many buildings as

humanly possible. When it comes to The Big One, there's no such thing as being overly prepared.

Oregon families cannot wait any longer for investments in our communities and in the future of our state. We must prepare now for any future economic downturn by investing in what gives our communities the opportunity to thrive and reduce demand for services in the future.

Sincerely,
Kyle Gullickson