

Submitter: Nickolaus Miehl

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On  
Capital Construction

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5531

Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support of this Senate Bill which would provide essential funding for the repairs and restoration of the Osborn Aquatic Center in Corvallis, Oregon.

The Osborn Aquatic Center is a critical statewide resource. It is one of only two indoor aquatic facilities in Oregon that includes a 50-meter long course pool and has the capacity to host major competitive events. It regularly serves swimmers and water polo athletes of all ages—from young children learning water safety to seniors participating in lifelong recreation, as well as adaptive athletes who depend on accessible design. The center has hosted OSAA-sanctioned high school district and state championships for swimming and water polo across multiple classifications (5A, 4A, and 3A), due to its size, accessibility, and central location.

Unfortunately, since October 2, 2024, Osborn has been closed following the discovery of significant corrosion on the steel beams supporting the roof over the natatorium. Subsequent engineering inspections revealed more extensive structural deterioration, leading to the full closure of the facility to ensure public safety. These findings have disrupted a wide range of community and statewide aquatic programs, including:

- Over 700 weekly swim lessons
- Lifesaving water safety instruction
- Adaptive swim programs and therapeutic use of a warm water pool
- Training space for ROTC units, Scouting badge certifications, scuba diving, and even underwater hockey
- Hosting of major club and high school meets that bring an estimated \$1.5 million annually into the Corvallis economy
- Employment for more than 100 hourly workers, many of them local high school and college students

My family has personally experienced the deep impact of this closure. Since 2018, my four children have been members of the Corvallis Aquatic Team. Living in Salem, we made the daily commute to Corvallis because of the high-quality coaching and the exceptional environment provided by Osborn. This facility offers resources that simply do not exist in our home community. While my two eldest children have graduated and moved on to college, my two youngest daughters—now 18 and 15—

remain committed to competitive swimming. The Osborn closure has forced them to train across multiple regional pools with irregular schedules, and has eliminated the possibility of home meets, which are integral to team spirit, family engagement, and competition readiness.

I fully recognize that my family's experience is just one among many. The closure of Osborn has affected hundreds of families across the Willamette Valley and beyond. Its restoration is not just a local concern—it is a statewide need.

We live in a state where rivers and the ocean are part of everyday life. Investing in aquatic infrastructure is a matter of public safety, public health, and community well-being. Osborn provides monitored, accessible water environments where children and adults can safely learn and thrive. This is a public good that warrants urgent attention.

I urge the committee and the Oregon Legislature to fully fund the proposed repairs to the Osborn Aquatic Center and restore this cornerstone of Oregon's aquatic community.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to Oregon residents.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nick Miehl  
Parent, Corvallis Aquatic Team Family