



President Courtney, Speaker Kotek, Co-Chair Nathanson, and Legislative Leaders,

As legislators, we have a responsibility to ensure that economic prosperity and opportunity are extended to every corner of our state so that all Oregonians—no matter where they live—can succeed. In many of our districts, the economic growth that drove Oregon’s unemployment rate down to record lows has not yet been realized. High unemployment and stagnant job growth still plague many communities in rural Oregon. Yet in other districts, state investments are needed to keep pace with population and economic growth. In these districts state investments will create economic returns that will not only pay for themselves – they will pay for investments elsewhere.

These challenges and opportunities are why we support capital investments in Oregon’s universities and wood products industry during the 2018 February legislative session.

We urge you to support the authorization of general obligation bonds to fund three projects at Oregon’s public universities: \$40 million for the Science Campus at the University of Oregon, \$39 million for an academic building on the OSU-Cascades campus, and \$9 million (combined general obligation and lottery bonds) for the fieldhouse at Eastern Oregon University. All of these investments are matched by funds raised by the universities.

These investments will also fortify Oregon’s nascent engineered wood products industry. All three projects incorporate the use of Oregon-based engineered wood products such as Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT). These products are milled in Oregon using wood that is harvested in Oregon. The veneer and engineered wood products industry is the second-largest manufacturing industry in the state, employing more than 8,500 Oregonians. By investing in higher education projects and generating additional demand for the industry, Oregon will create home-grown timber production and construction jobs in key geographic areas. This investment will demonstrate new applications and uses for CLT to the world.

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission has evaluated and approved all three of these projects for the current biennium. They have a broad geographic reach, will boost Oregon’s emerging market for manufactured wood products, and will produce economic dividends that will not only pay for themselves – they will generate revenues to finance future investments.

Oregon’s economy is headed in the right direction. If we are to maintain this momentum, the state must make strategic decisions that support Oregon industry, create jobs, provide opportunities for all sectors of our workforce, and provide education and research opportunities for Oregon students.

Sincerely,
Legislators



Senator Herman Baertschiger Jr.

Senator Lee Beyer

Senator Michael Dembrow

Senator Sara Gelser

Senator Bill Hansell

Senator Tim Knopp

Senator Dennis Linthicum

Senator James I. Manning Jr.

Senator Alan Olsen

Senator Floyd Prozanski

Senator Arnie Roblan

Senator Rob Wagner

Representative Teresa Alonso Leon

Representative Greg Barreto

Representative Daniel Bonham

Representative Knute Buehler

Representative Brian Clem

Representative Dallas Heard

Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer

Representative Caddy McKeown

Representative Dan Rayfield

Representative Greg Smith

Representative Sherrie Sprenger

Representative Duane Stark

Representative Rich Vial

Representative Gene Whisnant

Representative Brad Witt