



February 18, 2022

Senator Tim Knopp
Representative Vicki Breese Iverson
Representative Jason Kropf
Representative Jack Zika

Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
Delivery via email

Dear Honorable Legislators,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber of Commerce and our 1,200 business members in Central Oregon, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of the Oregon State University - Cascades Innovation District. The Chamber strongly supports the project and is excited to partner with OSU-Cascades to bring it to fruition.

OSU-Cascades' success continues to contribute to the Central Oregon community. We have a unique opportunity to support future development that will address many of our region's top priorities, such as affordable housing, access to higher education, childcare, a community assembly hall, and commercial and light industrial space. Many of our region's key sectors are eager to co-locate with OSU-Cascades. Recently, the Chamber co-hosted a well attended market sounding indicating business community's enthusiasm in the project.

The proposed OSU-Cascades innovation district remediates and transforms the existing demolition landfill into buildable land. The district is designed for 500,000 square feet of technically wired, mixed-use office, retail and housing, as well as outdoor gathering and event space. It will support opportunities to invent and bring research, ideas and products to market in bioscience, biotech, sports performance, health, outdoor products, energy engineering, applied and software engineering, sustainable tourism, the arts, and natural resources – all areas in which OSU-Cascades and regional industries have expertise. It will also be an opportunity for students to work with local enterprises, applying classroom theories to real world problems.

Creating an environment where businesses, their employees and our community excel together through collaboration, advocacy, resources and leadership to meet Bend's business challenges.

In order to begin building this exciting innovation district, \$10 million is being requested this legislative session. In a region where real estate is scarce, limiting the community's economic and quality-of-life potential, state investment in making the land buildable would take the cost of the real estate from about twice the market rate to market rate. This would allow for an infusion of private capital to build a promising community asset that will generate revenue for Central Oregon and the state.

Your support for the future OSU-Cascades innovation district is support for both Central Oregon's economic vibrancy *and* support for higher education. Your assistance in securing this \$10 million request for the OSU-Cascades innovation district is critical. The district will not only spur innovation by co-locating community organizations within a research university campus, but it's also a creative way to address many of Central Oregon's priorities with one investment.

Thank you for being a champion for this project and the opportunity to share the Chamber's support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katy Brooks", is written over a thin vertical line that extends downwards from the signature.

Katy Brooks
President + CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce

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