



March 5, 2024

Dear Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Oregon Council for Behavioral Health. OCBH is the statewide association of primarily nonprofit providers that deliver treatment for individuals with substance use disorders and mental illness. Our member organizations serve individuals living with the chronic diseases of addiction and mental illness. It is likely the behavioral health providers in your districts are members of OCBH. We would like to express our support for HB 4023 with the -3 or -6 amendment to improve the siting landscape for much-needed behavioral health facilities.

The dearth of residential behavioral health facilities in Oregon can be attributed to several factors including disinvestment, workforce shortages, and administrative burden. The legislature has made progress on all three fronts in recent years. However, one of the barriers that has gone unaddressed are the barriers that exist to siting facilities.

Our providers are most successful when they can meet an individual's needs in a community-based setting. Currently, the siting process and lack of adequate access to behavioral health resources means folks are being served in settings not designed for care, and in locations meant for industry, not living. This proposed amendment would increase the opportunities for providers looking to increase access to serve folks in their own communities.

We urge your support of SB 4023 with the -3 or -6 amendment.

Thank you,

Heather Jefferis
Executive Director, OCBH