



Board of County Commissioners
1820 Jefferson Street
PO Box 1220
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Kate Dean, District 1 Heidi Eisenhour, District 2 Greg Brotherton, District 3

February 27, 2023

Senator Murray
appropriations@murray.senate.gov

Dear Senator Murray;

The Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is pleased to be support the City of Port Townsend's request for \$1M in order to further the efforts of our community's Healthier Together Initiative. Our residents have consistently rated the need for a modern aquatic facility as a priority for the benefits it would provide to people of all ages and community wellness.

We recognize that funding facilities like this can be challenging, and so are participating in this multi-jurisdictional collaborative effort-including Jefferson County, Jefferson Healthcare, Port Townsend School District, Port of Port Townsend, the city of Port Townsend, Jefferson Aquatics Coalition and the Olympic Peninsula YMCA- in hopes that together we can accomplish this heavy lift.

Lack of a modern aquatics facilities impacts our communities in many ways. Jefferson County has consistently lost amenities and facilities that attract and retain working families. We are the oldest County by median age in the state but have no therapeutic pool available for seniors. We are a maritime community, surrounded by water on three sides, but have only a dated public pool with limited hours of operation and frequent closures due to repair, resulting in swimming lessons offered sporadically.

We are in dire need of a contemporary aquatics facility, along with health and wellness opportunities in our community. In 2019, Jefferson Public Health, the City of Port Townsend, and Jefferson Healthcare collaborated on a [Community Health Assessment \(CHA\)](#) county-wide. After a robust community process and gathering of data, the study concluded that stress, income, physical activity, health problems, and housing were the five top challenges for our community.

In addition, the State of Washington publishes [census tract demographic information](#) comparing statewide statistics. This demographic data shows that Port Townsend and Jefferson County median household income is below the statewide average, the disabled population is above the state average, and the mortality rate is above the state average. The State Recreation Conservation Office uses these indicators to determine the vulnerability of a community and prioritize funding for parks, recreation, and health and wellness opportunities.

Funding through this Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) will allow us to continue our efforts in scoping and designing a right-sized project and point us toward the appropriate funding and financing models. Jefferson County has already contributed funds to this project and will continue to invest in this important community need with our tools and resources.

The benefits of this project in a rural, economically-distressed community cannot be overstated. One building has the potential to bring jobs, drop-in childcare, water safety, activities for teens, therapeutic opportunities for seniors, fitness options and more.

Please consider helping Healthier Together get off the ground in Jefferson County. CDS funds will be highly leveraged by the committed collaborative partners to complete a game-changing project in a community that needs and deserves a wellness facility for people of all ages and abilities.

Thank you,
Jefferson County Commissioner Commissioners



Kate Dean, District No. 1



Heidi Eisenhour, District No. 2



Greg Brotherton, Chair, District No. 3