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ROBERT W. STRAUB
GOVERNOR



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE CAPITOL
SALEM 97310

March 25, 1977

The Honorable Les AuCoin
United States Representative
1220 S.W. Third Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97205

Dear Les:

This is to confirm our telephone conversation of last week reaffirming my continued support for building the new Veterans Administration Hospital on Marquam Hill.

Without attempting to review all of the pros and cons of the various sites which have been considered, I will try to summarize my present position on this matter. First, I believe it is important that the outmoded V.A. facility in Portland be replaced. This facility no longer meets current standards for safe and efficient operation.

Secondly, it is reasonable to select a replacement site convenient to the majority of veteran patients who are to be served. Demographic studies conducted for this purpose indicate the site should be within the city of Portland. Additionally, it is my belief that the mutually beneficial relationship between the V.A. Hospital and the Medical School should be maintained.

The Veterans Administration has consistently maintained that high-quality health care for veterans is facilitated if this close relationship to the Medical School is preserved.

Spokesmen from the Health Sciences Center have indicated that the cost of medical education would rise appreciably if the V.A. Hospital were located at a site far removed from their campus. Their arguments that V.A. physician staff could no longer teach medical students as efficiently as they do now has also been supported by the director of the Portland V.A. Hospital. I believe these positions are based more on a concern for cost effectiveness in medical education and patient care than on a belief that quality health care can only be delivered on Marquam Hill.

The Honorable Les AuCoin

Page 2

March 25, 1977

With regard to congestion on Marquam Hill, you have my assurance that I will continue to maintain a critical interest in the environmental impact of this construction program. While no definitive plans have yet been brought to my attention, I believe the Veterans Administration will make every effort to include adequate parking facilities and better access roads in the design of the replacement facility.

I authorize you to present this statement to appropriate Congressional committees reviewing this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robt Stewart".

Governor

RWS:js