



Written Testimony for the Senate Committee on Education

April 5, 2021 Public Hearing on Senate Bill 623

Mallorie Roberts, Legislative Affairs Manager for Transportation & Community Development

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), which represents Oregon's 36 county governments, I offer the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 623.

Advancing legislation that promotes a resilient, equitable, regionally-driven, and long-term economic recovery is a top priority for AOC in the 2021 legislative session. Senate Bill 623, the COVID Recovery & Workforce Modernization Act of 2021, takes concrete steps to further those priorities and AOC is therefore in strong support of the concept.

While both state and federal law recognize Local Workforce Boards and assign them the duty of ensuring regionally appropriate use of resources, Oregon's current approach to this work does not maximize the potential of local public-private partnerships. The disparate impacts of COVID-19 have only further highlighted the need to ensure equitable access to aligned, effective, regionally-appropriate services. Senate Bill 623 proposes an important and impactful step toward regionally appropriate recovery by affirming state and local roles, ensuring local engagement, responsiveness, and oversight, as well as building continuous improvement into system services and outcomes.

Senate Bill 623 combines a call to immediate, locally-driven action with the creation of a strategy that will improve our systems in the long-term. AOC supports this approach and appreciates the collaborative work of the proponents and stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. The Association of Oregon Counties requests that the committee move Senate Bill 623 to the floor with a do-pass recommendation.