

Testimony: HB 3017 Extension of Enterprise Zones

Good morning. My name is David Eatwell. I am the Economic Development Director for the West Columbia Gorge Consortium, which serves the cities of Fairview, Wood Village, Troutdale and Cascade Locks. I come here today to speak in support of House Bill 3017.

As a Board Member of the Oregon Economic Development Association, I can tell you that enterprise zones are responsible for creating and retaining jobs counted in the thousands and they have generating private investment totaling more than a billion dollars in the State of Oregon over the last 25 years. I am sure you will hear detailed accounts of some of the larger, most successful enterprise zones initiated in recent years. But I am not here to talk about those projects.

Within the Consortium's service area we have four small enterprise zones, by comparison to some that you will hear about today. The four cities of the Consortium have an aggregated population of less than 30,000. We do have sizable tracts of industrial zoned land, but the resources to develop these tracts are hard to come by for small communities. Without the benefits offered by an enterprise zone, these communities would have little possibility of attracting new development. The tax advantages of the enterprise zone enabled the City of Troutdale to bring FedEx and 700 jobs to the community. Even though the majority of those jobs are part-time, that is still huge for a city with a population under 15,000.

Economic indicators point to a slow reversal of negative trends that have left the economies of cities big and small decimated. Without the ability to attract businesses that bring jobs, industrial infrastructure investment, and tax base enhancement, the road back will be longer and more difficult. Please keep this instrument in our tool boxes and vote in support of House Bill 3017.