



OREGON ASSOCIATION OF MINORITY ENTREPRENEURS

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May 07, 2013

Chris Garrett
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Representative Garrett:

As the Chair and Founder of the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs (OAME), the largest minority, women and emerging small business organization in the Pacific Northwest, I am writing you today in opposition to House Bill 3316 which would change the appointment process for TriMet's board. OAME has a 25-year history of working on behalf of MWESBs with public officials and agencies such as TriMet.

TriMet is a national leader in contracting with minority and women-owned businesses and that leadership is a direct result of the TriMet Board of Directors' commitment to equity and opportunity. Under the board's guidance, **TriMet has been recognized nationally by the US Department of Transportation for their Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program** which helps local minority and women-owned businesses compete for prime contracting jobs on TriMet's projects.

More than 200 DBE firms were hired to work on TriMet's three previous capital construction projects with contracts valued over \$100 million. By breaking down large contracts into smaller bids, **TriMet has allowed local DBE businesses to compete in the bidding process** and gain experience that allows them to successfully compete for other projects throughout the region.

TriMet's commitment to equity extends beyond DBE contracting to transit equity as well. Last year, TriMet's board passed a \$1.3 million low-income fare program to help mitigate the impact of recent fare increases on low income, transit-dependent communities. **TriMet's board is committed to equal access and opportunity for residents and businesses** throughout our region; their leadership on equity is highly regarded in our community and greatly appreciated.

Changing TriMet's board **will replace leaders committed to equity and opportunity with political delegates who may not share these same values**. Shifting the board appointments does little to address TriMet's real problem: runaway health care costs.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Samuel Brooks
Chair, Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs

CC: Speaker Tina Kotek
Majority Leader Val Hoyle
Representative Chris Gorsek