

Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters



Affiliated with
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America



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March 11, 2015

Re: SB 809

Dear Chairman Dembrow and Members of the Senate Workforce Committee:

On behalf of the Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters, please accept this written testimony in support of SB 809, which would provide apprenticeship standards for publically funded projects. We feel the State of Oregon should continue its record of job creation, and opportunity for working Oregonians by advancing SB 809 in to law.

Apprenticeship programs have a number of positive benefits for the State, the community, and our future economy. In the next 5 years we will see more and more Oregonians retire after long and prosperous careers, which is great for them, but frightening to business. Businesses from all sectors will face a worker shortage in the coming years, and unless the State of Oregon acts swiftly there will not be a workforce to fill the gaps left by retirements. Without a skilled and trained workforce who will continue to build Oregon's schools, roads, bridges, and various other projects that are essential to the citizens of our State?

Requiring the use of apprentices on public projects, and requiring contractors who work on public projects to take a responsible approach to training Oregon's future is an easy avenue to ensuring a seamless transition of the generational shift in the workforce we face. By requiring apprentice utilization, and participation in apprenticeship programs Oregon will take proactive measures to prevent shortages.

Apprenticeship programs are a career path that many people may not be aware of. Apprenticeship programs tend to lead to life long rewarding careers with decent family wages, healthcare, pensions, and useful trade skills. Our state should do all it can to support and promote apprenticeship programs. Passing SB 809 is one way the state of Oregon can effectively promote apprenticeship.

Again, by advocating for apprenticeship utilization on publically funded project, we can set Oregon up for economic success moving in to the future. By providing a career path Oregon will ensure its future workforce is not only skilled, but also contributing members of society. Skilled workers often receive higher wages, which means higher tax revenue for the state to fund essential public services, and means workers have more disposable income that gets spent at local businesses and around the local community. Skilled workers who earn those family wages are less likely to be on public assistance, which means state coffers are freed up for those truly in need. Finally, apprenticeship programs are self-funded by those that put on the program.

Furthermore, by requiring apprenticeship hours on public projects the State saves taxpayer money. Projects can be built cheaper then when a contractor does not participate in apprentice utilization and employs only journey level workers. It stands to reason that when ten percent or more of the hours worked on a publically funded project are paid at a reduced apprentice rate, the costs savings to the State and its taxpayers would be significant.

In closing, the Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters urges you to support and advance SB 809 and encourage apprenticeship utilization and training the future workforce of our great state. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ron Robbins
Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters