



# JAY BOZIEVICH

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Lane County Commissioner  
West Lane District  
jay.bozievich@co.lane.or.us

DATE: April 8, 2015  
TO: Senate Committee on Workforce  
RE: SB 885, relating to workforce development in Lane County

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing on SB 885. It is one of the pre-session priorities established by the Lane County Board of Commissioners. Given the many discussions occurring statewide on how to best re-establish robust career and technical education programs in Oregon, we offer SB 885 as an opportunity for the legislature to learn more about the specific funding mechanism proposed within SB 885, and perhaps more importantly, the integration of our county's Economic Development Program with our Workforce Partnership and their Board-directed charge to establish flexible, yet targeted, employment training for Lane County youth.

Lane County's economy has been slower coming out of recession than the Portland metropolitan region. We have worked hard to identify our economic development priorities, and these include the food manufacturing, health care, and advanced technology sectors. We are also working very hard to "up-zone" existing industrial lands the un-incorporated community of Goshen, which is located at the intersection of Interstate Highway 5 and the state-designated freight route of Highway 58. We additionally have held a series of local economic development forums, and notably one of the priorities coming from these meetings was employers telling us that their ability to hire local high school graduates has been degraded due to the loss of technical education programs.

While these are promising developments, Lane County's we have been relatively unable to affect the youth employment rate. Unemployment amongst 16 to 19 year olds has always been higher than the overall unemployment rate in Lane County. In the years leading up to the recession, the unemployment rate for youth was typically 20 percent while the overall rate hovered around 6 percent. However, by 2012, the unemployment rate amongst 16 to 19 year olds had skyrocketed to more than 35 percent while the overall rate had started to come down. Youth unemployment rates retreated in 2013, but unemployed youth continue to make up more than one-quarter of the youth labor force.

Last session, the Oregon legislature appropriated \$7.5M for biennial support of the CTE Revitalization Grant. Of the school districts competing for this grant, both Bethel and Eugene 4J received funding. Of the federal funding that comes from the Perkins IV program, the Lane ESD received just under \$500,000 for calendar year 2014, which was allocated to each of the 16 school districts in Lane County.

SB 885 would bolster existing funding by up to \$500,000 for rural schools for two years, and we hope it adds to the body of knowledge Oregon is building relative to CTE effectiveness and funding.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY