April 16, 2015

Re: Minimum wage proposed increase

The Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce is a chamber of approximately 500 local businesses in our community. As a chamber of these local businesses we are writing to express our opposition regarding proposed increases in the state minimum wage level. The current minimum wage is already higher than that found in almost all states, and it is also significantly higher than the federal minimum wage. We support Oregon's current minimum wage which is indexed each year based on the Portland consumer price index.

Current statistics available indicate that approximately 8 % of state workers earn minimum wage. Only a small percentage are employed full time. Thirty percent are single adults and 15 percent are single parents. Only 1 % of Oregon's total workforce are single parent, minimum wage earners. The average income of an Oregon family with a minimum wage earner is $42,000 per year.

Oregon's high minimum wage level has not yielded economic gains for workers. Oregon has consistently struggled with unemployment issues, lagging wage and salary incomes, and poverty. Elevating the minimum wage to such a high level as proposed will not address these issues and lighten the burden on those working at this level. Such an increase will cause harm to the business community, cause some businesses to close, and reduce the number of employees that businesses can employ. Such a high increase will undoubtedly impact the quantity and quality of services provided to the general public. As a result of economic hardship to business owners, employees will be dismissed to balance budgets of local businesses.

Several legislative proposals, such as a paid sick leave, the carbon fuel issue, and others will have a very detrimental effect on our business communities. Considering all that, the Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce is clearly opposed to this minimum wage proposed legislation.

Respectfully submitted.

*Bob McDonald*

Bob McDonald
Executive Director
Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce