



February 8th, 2016

HB4089-1 – Corrugated Pallet Pilot

Dear Chair McKeown, Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development:

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 supports HB4089-1 pallet pilot project.

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555 represents over 20,000 members in Oregon. In 2014, our employees experienced some 568 injuries that merited a worker's compensation payment for their loss. The average claim was roughly \$12,500 per injury. Many of those injuries were related to freight movement and repetitive motion injuries.

UFCW Local 555 is interested in the pilot program that HB4089-1 would create at the Oregon Department of Corrections to bring goods to the prison system on lightweight, corrugated pallets instead of a traditional wood pallet. While we understand that not every item can come into the state on a corrugated pallet, where the state can take steps to reduce debilitating injuries to its employees during their workday is important to workers everywhere. We believe Oregon is a good place to test out the full life cycle of freight distribution, and then share its findings with those of us in the private sector. By engaging in a small pilot at the Department of Corrections, the state is demonstrating a willingness to be innovative in looking at ways to improve worker safety. When public employees are injured, it costs all Oregon taxpayers. UFCW Local 555 believes that the state has a responsibility to protect its own workers, and make its experiences known so other Oregon industries have good data from which to make their own business decisions.

UFCW Local 555 workers also care about the environment. Oregon has always been willing to do the heavy lifting on environmental issues. Our workers have been on the front lines of making policies like the Bottle Bill work for all Oregonians. We have worked with our employers on corporate sustainability initiatives and we are proud to be partners with our suppliers in finding ways we can contribute to proactive conservation initiatives. We are excited to see Oregon taking the lead on a measure that would not just reduce worker injuries, but have a positive environmental impact.

We ask that the committee support such a limited pilot program, and use the state's procurement dollars to look at innovative ways to protect workers and reduced costs to taxpayers. **Please support HB4089-1.**

Jeff Anderson
Secretary-Treasurer
UFCW Local 555