

Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters



Affiliated with
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America



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March 22, 2017

Re: HB 2162

Dear Chairman Holvey and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee:

On behalf of the Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters, please accept this written testimony in support of HB 2162, which would provide apprenticeship standards for state funded projects. We feel the State of Oregon should continue its record of job creation, and opportunity for working Oregonians by advancing HB 2162 into law. By doing so our state will join the rest of the West Coast where California, Washington, Hawaii, and Alaska already benefit from such programs.

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 state projects is an easy approach 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 HB 2162 is one way the state of Oregon can effectively promote apprenticeship. Looking at the successes in Washington State, since their adoption of apprenticeship utilization standards twelve years ago, construction apprenticeship has grown to the fourth largest university system in the state. With work already happening in Oregon through the Carpenters Union's partnerships with local school districts in implementing Career Connections; a pre-apprenticeship program for students, there needs to be a future for these kids. Through passage of HB 2162 our state can set up a prosperous career for those exiting high schools.

Furthermore, by requiring apprenticeship hours on state projects the State saves taxpayer money. Projects can be built cheaper than 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 HB 2162 and encourage apprenticeship utilization and training the future workforce of our great state. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ron Robbins
Regional Manager
Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters

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