



Representative Jeff Barker, Chair
House Committee on the Judiciary
900 Court Street NE, H-480
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Barker and Committee Members:

Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers (CGFG) is a nonprofit comprised of 440 growers and 20 shippers of tree fruit in the mid-Columbia region who together produce more than 225,000 tons of cherries, apples, and pears. In a time of significant budget constraints, HB 3279 would divert tax dollars from core services to fund an unnecessary employer mandate that would make it more expensive for employers to bring on and train new employees. **CGFG urges you to vote no on HB 3279.**

No employer can succeed without thoughtfully training employees in a way that aligns with each employee's responsibilities and prioritizes employee health and safety. While the ideal training program will vary depending on sector, firm characteristics, and employees' individualized needs, nobody has a stronger incentive than the employer to protect employees and ensure their success in the workplace. But instead of helping employers to provide the most effective training and maintain the safest possible workplaces, HB 3279 would earmark state tax dollars to develop a mandatory one-size-fits-all training course. This is the wrong approach.

Carving out a state-run training program for a single curriculum would duplicate the efforts of most employers to address these issues with a workplace-specific approach. Additionally, it would undermine employer initiatives to invest in workforce training by giving control over training to the state. This would send the wrong message and hurt employees, who benefit from employer competition to provide the best training.

The state should continue to work with employers to ensure workplaces are safe and to develop best practices to do so. Expensive mandates that stifle employer training programs is not the answer. We urge you to vote no on HB 3279.