



April 4, 2017

Representative Phil Barnhart, Chair
House Revenue Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Barnhart, Members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Chad Freeman, President of Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR). SEDCOR is the lead economic development agency in Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties.

My work at SEDCOR includes serving as the Chair of Oregon Economic Development Association's (OEDA) Government Affairs Committee. OEDA is a statewide non-profit organization consisting of economic development professionals who are on Oregon's front line in diversifying and expanding Oregon's economy.

Both roles have provided me with the opportunity to see and work first-hand with Enterprise Zones, as well as E-Commerce Zones.

I am here today to support HB 2243 with regards to increasing the number of E-Commerce Zones as well to extend the sunset of these zones.

I had planned on testifying in person on behalf of E-Commerce Zones. I sincerely apologize for not being here. Instead, I will be with Oregon Gov. Kate Brown touring a firm that added jobs specifically with the impact of the Electronic Commerce Zone. The jobs are in Independence, Oregon where they have an outsized impact and would not have happened without the Electronic Commerce Zone.

The project in Independence is a great example of how an E-Commerce project can work. FCR is a tech-based call center supplying back office support for a variety of tech employers throughout the United States. In 2015, FCR was looking for a new site and found Independence. Beginning with a building remodel in 2015, FCR began with 100 jobs in July and now 18 months later, provides more than 200 jobs to rural Oregon. For a community of a little more than 9,000 people, these 200 traded sector jobs have tremendous impact, equating to 200 families who can work in their community, support their schools, their firefighters and their quality of life. When FCR opened, we were able to host a large job fair with them and 20 other area employers. Over 500 job seekers attended and many walked away with new jobs.



When applicants do, it is stories like FCR's that highlight the economic impact programs like E-Commerce can have on our rural communities.

New industry equals new investments and new jobs in rural Oregon. New jobs lead to people investing their time and energy into their community from volunteering as a coach or in their child's school to participating in civic organizations and community events.

It all begins with an investment that continues to grow and promote more partnerships, leading to future investments. In order for our communities to compete, they need proven tools like E-Commerce Zones to attract new traded-sector industries.

I am kindly asking ODEA supports HB 2243 that extends the sunset on E-Commerce Zones and increases the number of zones.

Thank you for your support.