

**Written Testimony**  
**Chair Ken Madden**  
**Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB)**  
**In Support of House Bill 3437**  
**April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

The Oregon Workforce Investment Board plays an important role in supporting business and industry's needs through advising the Governor on workforce policy and plans, and contributing to economic success in Oregon. As many of you may know, the board accomplishes this work through aligning policy and resources across the workforce system through our strategic plan. The board also promotes a proactive innovative talent development system and is charged with holding the public workforce system accountable.

Under WIOA, the Oregon Workforce Investment Board continues to improve our collective efforts as a workforce system to identify industry trends and related talent needs. However, many businesses still struggle to be as competitive and successful as they would like because they cannot find the skilled employees they need. If a company doesn't have access to a skilled workforce, costs increase, they grow more slowly, worker wages may stagnate, and employees may leave our communities and our state for other opportunities.

The Talent Council was established to advise and be a resource for state agencies and educational institutions on issues of talent development, and to promote the growth and competitiveness of Oregon's traded sector and high-growth industries. It's about Oregonians being the first and best choice of Oregon employers. The Talent Plan is a resource to help unite state agencies, education, and training partners around a shared set of aspirations and actions to address Oregon's critical gaps in professional and technical occupations. The goal of OWIB's Strategic Plan is to create a road map for the workforce system to capitalize on its strengths, identify and address obstacles, and promote continuous improvement of services through actionable recommendations and guidance. Separate, these plans are critical and formidable. Combined, they become transformational.

Integrating and consolidating the work of the Talent Plan into the OWIB helps to create a more focused strategic direction and a more coordinated effort that will help the workforce system realize efficiencies, improve our effectiveness, and have increased impact. Our new economy and the required skill sets for workers is about many things. It's about the integration of applied skills, work-based learning, just-in-time training, formal degrees and certificates, and soft skills. Individuals with the right mix with the right job are valuable and more readily employable in Oregon's communities. Applied skills such as project management, teamwork, diagnostic thinking and problem-solving are critical. Skills that help a person "come up to speed" quickly and that set them apart from others are also significant factors for success. Remaining competitive by continually learning new skills and technologies is crucial.

Integrating and aligning the OWIB's Strategic Plan and The Oregon Talent plan will help the OWIB provide improved guidance on strategies and goals. It will help bring to the table improved connectivity and alignment of resources for the Local Workforce Development Boards as they implement the great work that they do through their Local Plans. Companies have fewer resources for training programs yet need them more than ever. Focusing on agile systems, transformative strategies, and unifying policies has the potential to significantly reduce the time it takes for workers to contribute in a meaningful way. Ultimately, this means that employers, businesses, and employees in Oregon are better positioned and equipped to compete and be successful in Oregon, and in the global marketplace.