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TO: Co-Chair Girod  
Co-Chair Holvey  
Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction

FR: Graham Trainor, Chief of Staff  
Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: **OR AFL-CIO Support for OMIC Project, Efforts to Boost High-Wage Manufacturing Sector in Region**

May 19, 2017

The Oregon AFL-CIO is the statewide federation of labor unions representing over 300,000 working women and men in just about every sector of our state's economy. The State Federation of Labor has also been the long-term advocate for all workers in the legislative process and a watchdog for both threats and opportunities facing working people in Oregon.

Coming out of the Great Recession, Oregon's economy and workforce has seen great changes with significant growth in some industries, and a decline in others. With some indicators today suggesting an incredibly strong and robust economy, we see the growth and record low unemployment rates a little differently than many. While these economic indicators provide some confidence about the stage of our recovery, they provide little confidence to a low-wage worker that is still not finding the types of opportunities in today's economy that they did prior to the Great Recession. An ongoing concern of ours about these trends includes the decline in high wage sectors like manufacturing and the growth in lower wage sectors like service and hospitality.

When we learned about the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) model in Sheffield, England and that there was interest in a similar concept in the Pacific Northwest, we were excited about the potential of a partnership between industry, government, academia and labor, very much in line with the successful AMRC model. As a worker advocate and with the criticism about what today's economy looks and feels like from the perspective of a low-wage worker in mind, we believe that we should be doing everything possible to grow our high-wage manufacturing sector. The OMIC effort is an exciting, innovative opportunity to do just that.

With the expectation that this effort continues to be a true partnership that includes the diverse perspectives of all partners involved, included those of workers in academia, the manufacturing and construction sectors, the Oregon AFL-CIO stands ready to enthusiastically support this budget request and the ongoing efforts to make it a success.

**The working women and men of the Oregon AFL-CIO strongly urge this Committee's support for the OMIC project as an exciting opportunity to grow the important high-wage manufacturing sector and regain lost ground as a result of the Great Recession.**

Thanks for the opportunity to provide testimony on this exciting opportunity for Oregon workers.