

From the Desk of
Representative
Dallas Heard

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs
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Floor letter in support of HB 3337
Landscaping licenses for Entry Level opportunities allowing growth
into the profession

OR Commission on Hispanic Affairs

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Sen. Sara Gelser
Rep. Teresa Alonso León

As the Chair for the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA) I, along with the full Commission, am writing in support of HB 3337 because we want to see expanded opportunities for over 500,000 Latinos and other emerging communities.

In 2015, I also testified for OCHA in favor of Rep. Heard's legislation, HB 3304, which directed the Landscape Contractors Board to develop a "real-skills test" and offer a Spanish language testing option. I was hopeful that my community could finally have equitable access to their chosen profession as licensed landscape professionals. Unfortunately, I was disappointed to learn that multiple sections of the test have a 100% failure rate. As you know, the Latino community is heavily involved in the landscape, nursery and agricultural industries and collectively hold vast knowledge in areas that would assist in their passage of this landscape contracting board test. But, despite some obvious issues with the method of testing candidates, HB 3337 does not remove testing requirements or harm the landscape profession by deterring entry of new candidates.

Instead, this bill creates entry level opportunities for members of my community to own their own business where the provisional license holder can bid up to \$8,000 bid limit/per client/per year while they learn the trade and save money for the test. Remember, its minorities and disadvantaged Oregonians who are most vulnerable to the expensive licensure requirements. The Planting & Irrigation total costs for the Practical Skills Test is \$1,200. For many in my community who wish to enter their chosen profession of landscape contracting, the test is too cost prohibitive and onerous and many give up on their dreams of owning a licensed small business.

In closing, we support this bill because our communities can no longer accept being excluded from their chosen profession because of language or financial barriers. These emerging entrepreneurs have so much to offer the profession, the state, the economy, their neighborhoods and their families by providing a service they love, in an industry and state they love to serve.

Please support this bill as it comes to the House Floor for full consideration.

Sincerely,

Alberto Moreno, Chair, Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs