



March 1, 2019

To the Honorable Senator Dembrow and Representative Power, Co-Chairs
And Members of the Joint Committee

RE: House Bill 2020

Although House Bill 2020 sounds like a perfect solution to further reduce pollutants, the proposed legislation, as written, fails to consider the long term economic and social impact to Oregon as a whole.

Our organization, Snake River EDA, focuses on retaining and expanding existing businesses and recruiting new investment and living wage jobs to a 3 county region covering 2 states – one of those counties is Malheur County. Oregon has a strong economy, but in Eastern Oregon, we have faced a far less than average growth rate in business and jobs. House Bill 2020 threatens to undo the positive economic strides we have been making. It creates a scenario where costs of producing goods and services will increase without consideration or compensation to offset those costs.

Eastern Oregon has a higher percentage of smaller businesses, employing 10 or less, and they will have a difficult time absorbing the additional costs associated with the proposed legislation. The manufacturing industries in Eastern Oregon are few and far between. They are an integral part of the economy in each county. The threat of this unbridled legislation is of huge concern to them. Companies such as EP Minerals, Ash Grove, and Kraft Heinz may be forced to consider the options of relocating or simply closing their doors. Businesses packing up and moving outside of Oregon are a reality for me. Sadly, over the past 2 years, I have had to assist several companies as they moved from Oregon into Idaho. Some were small mom and pop businesses and others were larger businesses. All sizes of business leaving impact the local economy, which in turn affects the schools and our children. As businesses leave, so do the families that work there.

This week, I, along with other Oregon Economic Developers, will be meeting with California companies who may want to relocate. One of the first few questions we will be asked is what is the cost of doing business and is Oregon a business friendly state? Knowing that there is pending legislation that has not considered critical long term economic impacts for the State of Oregon, these will be difficult to answer.

We want to expand our economic base in rural Oregon. We want stronger local businesses and we want our children to grow up and be gainfully employed in our communities. We ask that you reconsider how House Bill 2020 is currently written and consider the long term economic hardships it will cause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kit Kamo".

Kit Kamo
Executive Director