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ESTATE & BUSINESS PLANNING

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*Sent via Electronic Mail*

Speaker Tina Kotek and President Peter Courtney:

I respectfully submit this letter in opposition to HB 2020. This legislation will devastate the already fragile Eastern Oregon region along the Idaho border. It is my sincere hope that you will mindfully consider this impact and the inevitable unintended consequences that will result under the current version of the bill and reject the bill or allow for a sensible amendment that addresses this issue.

It is my privilege and honor to serve as the Chair of the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board ("Border Board"). We appreciated both of your support, as well as that of the entire legislature, in passing HB 2012 during the 2017 session, creating the Border Board, defining the vulnerable area along the Idaho state line as the Border Region, and supporting our efforts with a \$5 million allocation to the Border Fund. Those of us serving on the Border Board have devoted countless hours and energy to identifying what puts our slice of Oregon at a competitive disadvantage to booming Idaho, literally a stone's throw away, and developing policy and programmatic solutions to that problem. We currently have four bills working their way through the legislature that are reflective of our thoughtful and deliberate approach. We will soon be launching our loan and grant programs that are similarly well crafted. I look forward to continuing to update you as we continue our work and progress. It is from my perspective as Chair of the Border Board, and also that of a proud citizen of the Border Region, that I personally appeal to you today to proceed cautiously with HB 2012.

HB 2012 and the Border Board project is representative of the exact type of thoughtful consideration I beg of you today. You recognized two short years ago that our Border Region is vulnerable to Idaho's very different policies and politics and unique from the rest of Oregon. The current HB 2020 would tip the scales so disproportionately that any other attempt to balance or gain economic advantage over neighboring Idaho would be fruitless, including the work of the Border Board. Several major employers and contributors to the local economy will leave for Idaho, Nevada and China – that is a reality, not an empty threat.

Consumers who cannot leave, including the farmers and ranchers that are the backbone of our communities, will purchase fuel and related products from Idaho to avoid the increased cost. And increased fuel and natural gas prices will be the proverbial back breaking straw, pushing residents already feeling burdened by Oregon's higher income taxes, property taxes, and estate taxes to follow the already alarming trend of relocating across the river, all to the extreme detriment of the Border Region, but also the State of Oregon. On a personal level, as a local private practice attorney married to a local dentist, I sincerely worry about my little family's ability to remain in the region if we continue to lose clients, patients, friends, and neighbors to Idaho. Equally worrisome is the fact that the carbon impact of this exodus will negate the intended gains. Oregon currently leads Idaho in low carbon fuel, as well as in championing farming and business practices that minimize carbon output. Pushing consumers and industry out of Oregon to locales with lower standards will actually increase emissions and negate the work proponents of HB 2020 are trying to accomplish.

While I recognize that lawmakers are naturally wary of exceptions, I urge you to be equally cautious of imposing one-size-fits-all solutions across our diverse state. HB 2020 simply does not fit for the Border Region. Our proximity to Idaho requires, at the very least, due consideration of an amendment phasing in any mandates to sync with Idaho in recognition of our exposed and vulnerable Border Region economy. This would afford us a fighting chance to deliver on the promise of HB 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Shawna Peterson*

Shawna Peterson

cc: Joint Carbon Reduction Committee Members  
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