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Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Representative David Gomberg
Senator Lee Beyer
900 Court Street
NE Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Gomberg and Beyer,

The City of St. Helens urges continued investment in the Oregon Business Development Department's (OBDD) biennial budget. OBDD, or Business Oregon, is responsible for providing economic and community development enhancement throughout the state. Our city relies directly on Business Oregon programs and partnership as we work to revitalize our local and regional economy, recruit employers and jump start our city's redevelopment. We ask your support for:

POP 105: Brownfields Redevelopment Fund: \$10M in Lottery Bonds to Capitalize Fund

The Brownfield Redevelopment Fund provides loans and some grants to communities to support industrial/employment land readiness, affordable housing development, reuse of underutilized properties, and other community and public infrastructure investments on brownfield sites. We have relied on Brownfield funding to plan for industrial redevelopment and this fund is critical to revitalization efforts on brownfield properties.

POP 107: Special Public Works Fund (SPWF): \$50M in Lottery Bonds to Recapitalize Fund

This fund provides market rate and below market rate loans and some grants for municipal infrastructure and other facilities that support economic and community development. Specifically, the fund is used to build/rebuild essential infrastructure including levees, water systems, sewer systems, broadband, and roads. Our City is currently seeking loans from the fund to finance infrastructure for public amenities and municipal public works that are critical to our City's ability to attract private investors and create economic development opportunities.

POP 110: Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF): \$40M In Lottery Bonding to Fund Regional Projects

The City of St. Helens works closely with the Governor's Regional Solutions Team to identify priorities and opportunities for economic and community development projects critical to our growth. RIF money is used to fill funding gaps for priority regional projects. We need this resource to be available as we redevelop and seek to leverage available resources.



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These policy option package investments will support long-term growth and economic development in our city and across the state. We urge your support.

The City St. Helens would also like to express concern with some of the reductions proposed in the Governor's Recommended Budget. Reduction of funding for Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) will have direct, negative impacts on our city and business community. Though we do not have a local SBDC, we do make referrals to the SBDC in Portland. This is not ideal, but we have felt the support of the center as a valuable resource to businesses in South Columbia County. We would advocate for additional investment in this programming, rather than a reduction as we come into a time of rapid growth and business expansion thanks to partnership with Business Oregon. The SBDC network has been especially invaluable during this pandemic. This proposed reduction comes at a terrible time for businesses struggling to recover.

Thank you for your thoughtful work in support of economic development and thriving communities across Oregon.

Sincerely,

John Walsh
City Administrator

C: Senator Johnson, Representative Witt