



June 8, 2021

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Burdick, Vice Chair Boquist, and Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in regarding HB 2343: Relating to local government authority to suspend enterprise zone employment requirements. On behalf of the Bend Chamber's 1,500 business members, the organization whole heartily supports the state's Enterprise Zone program and the positive impact it has on job creation and retention.

In partnership with Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO) which manages the five enterprise zones located in our region, we support additional flexibility for zone sponsors to mitigate challenges presented by COVID-19. The last 18 months has been an unprecedented time for businesses, as they have navigated the complex web of Executive Orders and other state mandates to ensure the health and safety of their employees and the community.

The provisions outlined in HB 2343, and amendments adopted by the House committees of reference, provide enterprise zone sponsors flexibility to assist participating employers by temporarily waiving employments requirements prescribed by the authorizing statute. While participating companies have made long term investments and increased employment, as required by the enterprise zone program, many have been forced to furlough or lay off employees due to COVID-19 executive orders and restrictions on their operations, which has led to the potential "claw back" of previously exempted taxes.

HB 2343 provides a thoughtful and tailored solution to this problem, and is a welcome relief for impacted businesses in the craft brewing, aviation and speciality food products industries among others in our region. We appreciate the bi-partisan work to move this important bill forward, and on behalf of the businesses we represent, urge a yes vote on HB 2343.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katy Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical line that separates it from the typed name below.

Katy Brooks
President + CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce

Creating an environment where businesses, their employees and our community excel together through collaboration, advocacy, resources and leadership to meet Bend's business challenges.