

To: Joint Committee on Transportation and Development

RE: Business Oregon 2021-23 Budget Proposal

From: Roberta Robles, Transport Economist

This testimony is in support of most aspects of the Business Oregon Budget Proposal, but has the following suggestions:

1. Remove Aerospace and Defense industries as emerging industries to support. Both represent enormous amounts of carbon release and not in keeping with Oregon's goal of reducing GHG emissions in the transport sector.
2. Business Oregon has not accounted for the enormous increases in Cannabis, Hemp and Marijuana businesses. They have seen enormous growth in the last year and are not adequately reflected in the budget proposal. This leads me to believe the people who prepared this report are biased against these industries and therefore Oregonians are missing an important economic and jobs development. People want to work in the cannabis industry. There are over 260,000 new employees in the cannabis industry. This could grow substantially if Business Oregon made it a priority.
3. The anticipated decline in transportation equipment manufacturing could be shifted to improving support for bicycle manufacturing. This is hindered at the federal level (import/export issues) and causing huge shortages in bicycle supply chains. Business Oregon should be the lead agency to represent Oregon bike retailers in advocating for deregulation at the federal level. This would also provide a clear nexus on reducing GHG emissions in the transport sector. Bicycles are the most efficient form of transportation and this efficiency is not captured in these economic projections.
4. Earthquake proofing is preparing for an emergency over the needs of existing emergencies. The City of Portland declined to require seismic retrofitting on private housing because it causes affordability issues. Likewise the entire State of Oregon is having affordability issues and deferring earthquake proofing in support of everything else is a value based budgeting choice. These tradespeople should be building housing not earthquake proofing.
5. Arts and Culture dollars should go directly to indigenous communities. I would like to remind Business Oregon that indigenous people in the USA did not have the freedom of religion until 1972. This lack of freedom needs reconciliation in the arts.

Oregon Small Business Administration

I myself have had my hemp based minority business certification delayed indefinitely because the Small Business administration is waiting for the USDA to make recommendations on hemp advertising definitions. The USDA has delayed this decision, again. I'm closing this business because I didn't get support when I needed it. I am now denied business opportunities in the non-cannabis industries (GIS) because my business was not certified. I was qualified, but not certified.

This "hemp" constraint is not applied to cannabis businesses, even though they sell hemp based products in their dispensaries. Please relax this decision making authority in the SBA; they don't seem to understand the legal complexities in the hemp and cannabis industry has nothing to do with minority status. Indeed this lack of protection is allowing a bottom feeding frenzy of capital predators on minority entrepreneurs.

Weeds and bikes are the next green revolution if they get a little help from Business Oregon. This lack of understanding of the business community of the potential of both of these industries is disappointing.

Thanks
Roberta Robles