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February 1, 2021

Chair Representative John Lively  
Vice-Chair Representative Jami Cate  
Vice-Chair Representative Jason Kropf  
House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments support for HB 2345 - Rural Capacity

Dear Co-Chairpersons and Members of the Committee:

The Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG) supports passage of HB 2345 as a means to provide additional community and economic development servicing and direct benefit to our rural and smaller communities. While we strive to meet the needs of all of our communities, Economic Development Districts (EDDs) and other state and local partners are strained in meeting all needs within very limited funding.

With a small additional investment toward EDDs to build capacity and staffing to support our rural and smaller communities, we can better fill an identified service gap for Oregon communities that have historically had no means or sources of revenue to meet these identified needs.

In addition, we conservatively believe a minimum 3:1 return on investment can be expected based upon models in other states. As an example, access to 15 hours (or an estimated \$1,000) of free grant writing and funding application assistance can see a return of \$100,000 - \$1,000,000 or more for a community prioritized project and identified need.

The more we are able to support our communities in the identification of local priorities and assistance in leveraging funds and identifying new funding sources, *the greater capacity we build for our smaller and more rural communities and the entire State of Oregon*. Such efforts also help support and build upon existing relationships and partnerships with state, federal and philanthropic interests. We ask for your support HB 2345.

Regards,

Renata Wakeley  
MWVCOG Acting Executive Director