



February 1, 2021

House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: COIC and OEDD support for HB 2345

Dear Chair John Lively and Members of the Committee,

OEDD and our statewide network of member Economic Development Districts are strongly in favor of passage of HB2345 as a tool to help Oregon's rural communities meet their needs through grant writing and resource development. As you know, rural communities do not have the same capacity as larger communities to access and administer grant programs. Oregon's Economic Development Districts have long augmented rural community capacity, and this need is growing. To date, we have been supported in this effort primarily by a small amount of capacity funding from the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA), and some Districts have utilized other competitive federal grant programs, but the state has to date not been a capacity funding partner in delivering on this need. Oregon's Economic Development Districts are well-situated to deliver these capacity services because we already work with the communities, we understand their needs, and we know the funding sources.

We understand that legislators are going to have to make tough funding decisions this session. HB 2345 represents a very low-cost investment that will yield significant benefits to rural communities and the state. HB 2345 will amplify our efforts to support rural communities in identifying and prioritizing their economic recovery needs, and then securing resources to meet those needs. These needs could be small business recovery programs, broadband initiatives, workforce development initiatives, or infrastructure needed for community readiness. Together, these investments will help rural communities and businesses recover faster and better, ultimately supporting individual, family, and community prosperity, and reducing the need for state services and increasing local and state tax revenue. HBA 2345 is an extraordinarily low-cost investment that should yield significant benefits.

OEDD stands ready to support this service by providing a means for the Districts and our partners to coordinate and guide the implementation of this program. We are convinced that HB 2345 will provide tangible benefits to our rural communities and the state as a whole, and we strongly urge passage.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Aycock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scott Aycock, President, OEDD