



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 4005
SUBMITTED BY SHEILA MURTY, EVP, PEOPLE AND CULTURE
ON BEHALF OF TILLAMOOK COUNTY CREAMERY ASSOCIATION
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD
February 2, 2022

Chair Power and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4005. My name is Sheila Murty and I am the Executive Vice President of People & Culture at Tillamook County Creamery Association. We are a 113-year-old farmer-owned, farmer-led cooperative, which is known for the quality of the products we produce and for our commitment to working collaboratively to solve complex problems.

Laid particularly bare by the pandemic, child care is one such problem. As the largest employer in Tillamook County, this investment provides an opportunity to enhance the quality of life for our workforce through increased quality and supply of local child care resources.

Child care is primarily funded by families that cannot afford the true costs associated with care for children. While parents are unable to afford care, child care providers are not charging enough to cover the costs to provide care, often subsidizing a lack of public investment in the system with their low wages. The current funding structure is unsustainable and as a result, every county in Oregon is a child care desert for at least one age group of children.

Tillamook County itself is an extreme child care desert for all age groups, with only 12% of children ages 0-5 having access to a slot. It is even worse for infants, with only 4% of infants ages 0-2 having access.

Over the past two years, our office-based employees have worked remotely and we've tried to create a flexible environment to accommodate child care needs and schedules, however such solutions are not equitable for our production facility employees who may work nights or weekends, nor are they a long-term fix. A recent



survey in Tillamook County found 75% of employees missed 1-5 days of work per month due to child care issues. As businesses and work schedules start to get back to the new normal, and those parents are required to come onto worksites again, the need to find care will increase dramatically. In order to satisfy our commitments to fulfilled employees and enriched communities, we need help finding both short and long-term solutions to the lack of child care supply.

House Bill 4005 can jumpstart work on the ground in rural areas like Tillamook County, as well as throughout the State, through investments in capacity building grants, provider incentives, and rate subsidies to address the actual cost of running a child care business. Longer term solutions will require public-private partnerships and smart investments from the public sector, so we respectfully ask the Committee to support this investment and create such opportunity.