

February 8, 2022

Senate Committee on Labor and Business
Senator Kathleen Taylor, Chair
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Taylor and Members of the House Committee,

I am writing to express the City of Gresham’s support for Future Ready Oregon, SB 1545.

Senate Bill 1545 creates a series of grant programs aimed at assisting those in priority populations to obtain jobs in the sectors of construction, health care, and manufacturing. The City also supports the -2 amendment which establishes and appropriates funds for the Prosperity 10,000 Program.

The Gresham City Council supports public policy and budget allocations that advance equitable outcomes for Oregonians. The City is actively engaged in evaluating its own practices and supports state legislation and budget investments that reduce disparities. We share the value of increasing funding and providing additional opportunities for priority populations identified in this legislation. The City supports the priority population definition within the -2 amendment.

This investment is particularly necessary during the continued economic impacts and loss of income from the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation is critically needed to overcome barriers that residents in Gresham continue to face. The City of Gresham and East Multnomah County residents have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, with some of the highest rates of coronavirus infections in the state. The economic dislocation has made workforce development funding of imperative importance, and workforce development should be distributed to make sure that those have the greatest need receive assistance. The Prosperity 10,000 Program offers the opportunity to provide coaching, training, and job placement to address systematic inequities in East Multnomah County and throughout the state. This investment will improve capacity and responsiveness of the public workforce system and ensure services and benefits are provided to priority populations. We look forward to collaborating with our local workforce development board for this needed investment.

The investments within Future Ready Oregon provide needed resources to address labor shortages through apprenticeship and career pathway programs. We urge your support for SB 1545.

Sincerely,

Brian Monberg
Government Affairs Manager
City of Gresham