

Testimony of Metro Council President Peterson
Joint Committee on Semiconductors
January 30, 2023



Metro appreciates the leadership of Senator Wyden, Senator Merkley, Representative Bonamici, and Governor Brown in creating the Semiconductor Task Force. I served on the Task Force and Metro staff participated in the industrial lands subcommittee. We appreciated the opportunity to contribute to this valuable work and are encouraged to see the strong momentum by so many to pass needed legislative solutions.

Metro is the regional government for the greater Portland metropolitan area, tasked by Oregon statute with making decisions every six years about how and where the region will grow. Our region has a strong track record of upholding the goals of Oregon's statewide land use planning system – protecting farms and forests by facilitating efficient urban development, while providing additional room for people and jobs, by expanding the urban growth boundary, when needed.

Metro has long been a leader in supporting the industrial land needs of our region. We work hand and hand with our local jurisdictional partners, stakeholders, and economists to identify the employment land needs of our region. Through this process, we've discovered that the biggest barrier to new industrial development in our region is not land supply, but whether the land is actually ready for development. This usually includes addressing critical challenges like infrastructure, site assembly and aggregation, natural resource mitigation, and brownfield remediation.

This is why Metro, alongside our partners, have put considerable effort into ensuring that the land we bring in to the UGB for employment uses, results in shovel-ready developable land for industry. This has included providing funding for local governments to develop plans for industrially zoned lands and funding needed transportation improvements to facilitate development.

In addition, in 2011, 2014 and 2017, Metro worked with state and regional partners, and private business interests to develop an industrial land inventory. In this process, we conducted a comprehensive review of large development-ready sites that could be used to develop high-paying manufacturing and traded-sector jobs. Then, in 2020, we created an industrial site readiness toolkit in collaboration with the Port of Portland, Greater Portland Inc, and other partners. This toolkit provides a guide on how to move underused land into active uses, creating jobs and economic growth in our region. Spoiler – it's primarily a list of different funding programs, because at its core, money is really what's needed to get sites ready for development. Money for roads, for pipes, and for other utilities. Money to purchase multiple

properties in order to aggregate them to a size that fits industry's needs. Money for site remediation and to overcome other redevelopment barriers.

Through our work on the task force, we've spent the last year working alongside our partners to understand the land needs of the semiconductor industry in this moment, and were pleased to see a strong call out for industrial site readiness programs in the recommendations. We've been working to elevate these issues and gain legislative support for site readiness program for over a decade, and are excited to see that they were included.

However, Metro does not support efforts to upend our land use system. Specifically, we are concerned with efforts to circumnavigate the local process and break promises made less than a decade ago on urban and rural reserves. Land use planning at the local level is so important, because when jurisdictions have not prepared for growth, or don't have the money or the ability to put the critical infrastructure in place, the desired growth does not materialize. Damascus is an extreme example.

We urge you to work with our established land use system to support your local partners in finding solutions to achieve the outcomes we all want to see which is more development ready land for the semiconductor industry, while protecting our valuable farm and forest land. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I look forward to continuing to work with you and others on advancing solutions to continue to grow our economy and our semiconductor industry in Oregon.