



Date: February 6, 2023

To: Chair and Members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee

From: Scott Bruun, OBI

RE: Testimony in support of SB 135

Chair Meek and Members of the Committee,

I am Scott Bruun, director of tax, fiscal and manufacturing policy for Oregon Business & Industry. OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 135. OBI fully supports the extension of the state's rural enterprise zone property tax exemption program, to 2032, as called for in SB 135.

Given the testimony I gave just a few minutes ago, I won't restate OBI's general support for enterprise zone programs. I will say, however, that the state's rural enterprise zone program - and the longer periods of property tax exemption allowed under that program - are vital tools for rural employers and local governing communities. Many of Oregon's rural communities have experienced acute economic problems in recent years, and recent decades. History has demonstrated that an economic challenge in Portland or the Willamette Valley, often means economic shock in the state's rural communities.

There are a number of reasons for this, of course, and it's a topic that would probably merit its own informational hearing here or in the Economic Development and Small Business Committee. I will only note that past legislatures and legislative leaders have acknowledged this and built our current rural enterprise zone program to help mitigate the economic imbalance and unique challenges.

OBI requests that this committee provide continued support for that proven job-creating and community-strengthening work by passing SB 135.

Thank you.

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