



March 6, 2023

The Honorable Janelle Bynum, Chair
House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business
Oregon State Legislature

Testimony on House Bill 3272

My name is Lance Randall and I am the Executive Director of the Black Business Association of Oregon. We are a non-profit economic development organization that strives to achieve economic equity, that is sustainable and lasting for Black owned businesses and residents in Oregon. I have come before you today to express my full support for House Bill 3272, which permits the Secretary of State to share and communicate with approved organizations information about ethnicity, domicile and veteran status of owners or principals of businesses that apply for or renew their license, permit or registration in Oregon.

Every business that desires to operate in the state must register with the Secretary of State's Office, and there are many businesses owned by people of color that are registered to do business in Oregon. However, there is no way to identify the race and ethnicity of these businesses because the information is not being captured when they apply for or renew their registration. By capturing this information we can more opportunities for businesses owned by people of color to expand, grow and prosper.

With this information non-profit organizations like ours can identify and reach out to businesses of color across the state to provide them with services and technical assistance that enhance their operations, and help those that are not COBID certified become certified. In addition, all 36 counties and the 241 incorporated cities in the state will be able to identify businesses of color that are located their municipalities and use the data to help them meet their diversity, equity and inclusion goals.

On December 12, 2022, I attended the Annual Leadership Conference where a preliminary 10-point policy agenda with an overarching vision of Shared Prosperity was revealed. This agenda presented opportunities for action in 2023 and beyond. Point number 9 of the policy is titled, "**Economic Development: Create an economic development infrastructure that supports business expansion statewide.**"

The preamble of Policy Point 9 states, "*It's time to rethink how we organize for economic development. Effective economic development efforts bring community leaders together to provide responsive services and to make the case for doing business here. Currently, Oregon's public and private efforts are well-meaning, but scattered and misaligned. As a result, Oregon is missing opportunities to create, recruit and grow businesses.*"

Policy point 9 also gave three recommendations to Create a better coordinated economic development infrastructure. One of the recommendations in this section says, "**Create a state-level forum to identify and address the specific challenges of minority and women owned businesses.**"

To address the specific challenges of minority and women owned business as outlined in this recommendation, it is paramount to have a mechanism in place to identify businesses by race and ethnicity. House Bill 3272 is the mechanism that will help us find businesses owned by people of color, and is the key component to improve Oregon's economic infrastructure to support all businesses that are registered to operate in the state. I urge you to push this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lance".

Lance J. Randall

Executive Director

Black Business Association of Oregon