



Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

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March 14, 2023

The Honorable Paul Holvey, Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: HB 3306 - **Oppose**

Chair Holvey, Co-Vice Chairs Elmer and Sosa and Committee Members:

Associated Oregon Loggers (AOL) is Oregon's state forest operator trade association which represents nearly 1000 forest contracting businesses. Our members have been involved in the management of Oregon's forests for generations and provide their local communities with economic stability, Oregon with healthy and vigorously growing forests and the nation with renewable building materials. Thank you for the opportunity to share with you the voice of nearly 22,000 hard working Oregonians who need support from the state to address workforce challenges in our sector.

Although this bill is well-intentioned, AOL opposes HB 3306 for a few reasons.

Our association is serious about workforce development and helping our small business members grow a sustainable workforce to address our climate, housing and wildfire crises. We have created a Workforce Development Program and have a dedicated full-time manager of the program.

But the bill erroneously assumes that placing someone in a paid work experience to develop a workforce is the same as hiring someone into a full-time position. These programs are meant to encourage employers to give people a chance who might otherwise not be considered or need to be developed into a specific role. Because the employer is taking a risk in developing the individual through a workforce development program, the state provides some subsidy.

Rather than making programs more onerous on employers or reducing their ability to take on additional people because of increased costs, the state should be making it easier and less burdensome on employers who offer workforce development programs.

Additionally, workers in the forest contracting sector can have wages that vary widely based on experience, complexity of work, cross-training and more. The way the bill would have the wage of an individual in a program calculated could result in their wage being higher than a full-time employee on the same crew.

Perhaps the forest contract sector is unique in this regard, but we believe it not to be. We are happy to look for solutions to amend the bill to achieve the sponsors' intent. Perhaps it would be better to have the participant paid no less than 90% of the wage of the lowest paid or newest employee. Perhaps this concept should be paired with additional funding for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to offset additional employer costs. Perhaps there is another way to create the kind of honest and fare pay system sought for workforce development programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on our views of HB 3306.

Graciously,

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