

Co-Chairs, Co-Vice Chairs, and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2098. Oregon's transportation infrastructure is the victim of historic underinvestment, and we are heartened by the progress made towards improving two important pieces of our transportation infrastructure: the I-5 bridge and the Rose Quarter. LIUNA Local 737 urges the committee to support the construction of these critical infrastructure projects under project labor agreements (PLAs). **As currently written, the -2 amendment will not support good outcomes for Oregon's workers, especially for women and people of color. Specifically, LIUNA Local 737 believes the language in Section 7 (2) (lines 12-18) should be removed, as it seems designed to subvert PLAs, despite their excellent outcomes for workers and the state as a whole.**

PLAs are the easiest way to ensure that these projects support Oregon's workers. Having PLAs on these projects will ensure that workers have access to full family healthcare and retirement benefits. These are basic rights that workers who will work on some of the most critical pieces of our state's infrastructure should have.

Additionally, by partnering with union apprenticeship programs, Oregon will be able to deliver better outcomes for women and people of color. **Union apprenticeship programs deliver better outcomes for women and people of color than non-union apprenticeship programs.** A 2021 report from the University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) found the following¹ data for Oregon:

- In trades represented by both union and non-union programs, unions graduate a significantly higher proportion of apprentices. Unions had a graduation rate of 58% while non-union programs had a graduation rate of 36%.
- Women and BIPOC are significantly more likely to finish their programs when enrolled in a union apprenticeship compared to a non-union apprenticeship. Of the 416 women enrolled in union programs between 2011 and 2015, 50% completed, compared to only 29% of the 108 women enrolled in non-union programs. People of color also had higher rates of completion in union programs (45%) compared to non-union programs during the same period (40%).
- Black apprentices experienced the lowest graduation rates of all racial/ethnic groups (30%). However, a substantially higher proportion of Black apprentices in union programs graduated (33%) compared to non-union programs (23%).
- A significantly higher proportion of women separated from non-union programs (51%) than from union programs (38%).

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https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.uoregon.edu/dist/a/13513/files/2021/11/Constructing_A_Diverse_Workforce.pdfv

- Forty-six percent of all women in union apprenticeship programs are entering trades with an average hourly wage of \$40 or higher, compared to 19% of all women in non-union programs.
- Similarly, 55% of BIPOC in union programs are enrolled in trades with an average hourly wage of \$40 or higher, versus just 20% of BIPOC in non-union programs.

The data does not lie: union apprenticeship programs produce better outcomes for our state. The workforce pipeline our programs maintain results in better outcomes for women and people of color.

We urge the joint committee to remove section 7 (2) from the -2 amendment. We further urge the committee and Legislature to support PLAs on all major infrastructure projects, including both the I-5 bridge and Rose Quarter projects. If the Legislature truly wants to ensure that workers have decent livelihoods, that these projects support women and people of color, and that these projects are built to the highest standards, then the Legislature and this joint committee must support PLAs.

Thank you.

Ryan Nielsen
Political and Legislative Representative
LIUNA Local 737