

Submitter: Blair Larsen

On Behalf Of: City of Sweet Home

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB4042

Honored Committee Members,

I am writing to ask you to please re-establish the Regionally Significant Industrial Sites (RSIS) program and to capitalize the Industrial Site Loan Fund.

I am the only economic developer working in our small, rural, low-income community. We don't get much attention from the larger cities, and we may not have the workforce or infrastructure they they have, however, we have some important amenities that many other communities don't have--Land and Water. We have very large tracts of developable land within our City limits with comparatively few impacts from wetlands. We routinely market these properties to site selectors looking for industrial property to develop. However, what we don't have is hurting our chances with this companies, and that is infrastructure.

Depending on the needs of the company, a major industrial development in our community will cost millions of dollars just to bring in adequate electricity and natural gas service. These costs put us and many other communities out of the running for industrial developments that will end up bringing jobs and investments to other states or bigger cities. We simply can't compete with other states with more robust investments in infrastructure.

The saddest part about this is, the investment pays for itself. The increased industrial activity and increase jobs brought to the area from one of these developments more than pays for the investment. But when a community doesn't have the money to invest in the first place, it becomes an unavoidable, tragic catch-22. We don't have the money to invest in the needed infrastructure, because we don't have the industrial developments, and we don't have the industrial developments because we don't have the needed infrastructure.

Last year, the RSIS program expired. Further, the legislature has never capitalized the Industrial Site Loan fund. HB 4042 is a simple way to give communities like Sweet Home a strong tool for financing infrastructure and luring investment and jobs throughout Oregon.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue.

Blair Larsen

Community & Economic Development Director  
City of Sweet Home