



February 12, 2024

Chair Pam Marsh
Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 4112

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Levy and Levy, and members of the Committee,

My name is Alicia Chapman, and I am the owner & CEO of Willamette Technical Fabricators in Portland. My business is a custom complex metal manufacturing company focused on transportation and clean energy infrastructure, such as hydropower dams. We are also a certified Oregon Benefit company, committed to a triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit. We work closely with community-based organizations to provide clean tech manufacturing apprenticeships and careers to women, people of color, and people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system. We are creating opportunities for people from the communities that are disproportionately impacted by climate change, but who have traditionally been left out of the clean energy economy, to develop and support innovative solutions to help Oregon become more resilient and energy-independent.

Like all Oregon manufacturers, I am extremely limited by the lack of available industrial land, and even more constricted by the needs of the massive infrastructure that we specialize in. Last year I had to open a second location in Vancouver, and beginning this year, while our engineering will remain headquartered in Oregon, the majority of our production will happen in Washington. That means that the majority of the welding, machining, and inspection jobs that allow the average worker in our shop to make six figures and great benefits without a college degree, and all of their payroll taxes, are leaving Oregon.

My family and I still live in Oregon, and I'm hopeful that this move is only a temporary solution. We've been working with the Port of Portland to develop a plan for a custom-built facility with enough space for 400 workers and apprentices on an undeveloped site near the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. It will take major investments to get this site shovel-ready and to construct the facility and connect it to rail and barge access. The \$20M Opportunity Fund that House Bill 4112 will establish could provide some of the initial support we need, and the required matching dollars needed to apply for federal grants from the Inflation Reduction Act, Department of Transportation, and Department of Energy.

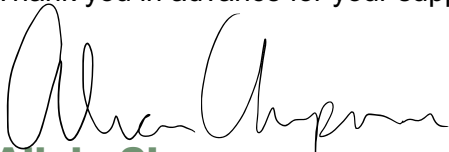
I am especially encouraged to see that retraining of workers is specifically named an eligible use of funds, which is new from last year's bill, and something that will allow us not only to provide good family-wage jobs to entry-level apprentices, but also to people with some existing

experience in the trades who are interested in learning the advanced manufacturing techniques we apply, including CNC programming, robotic automation, and machine learning/artificial intelligence. These are people who can't afford to stop working fulltime to go back to school, and who could otherwise be pushed out and end up in poverty, on drugs, or on the streets.

I want to stress the sense of urgency and the heavy competition that Oregon is facing. Businesses like mine are evaluating tough tradeoffs about where to establish, grow, and invest in our workforce. Oregon needs to leverage our history of manufacturing and technology innovation, and lead in the clean tech economy, or risk missing out on the huge environmental and economic benefits that it could bring to our state.

Finally, I want to reiterate how this bill will support the continued growth and prosperity of Oregon's manufacturing industry, which is one of our state's most racially diverse industries, moving us closer to achieving our state equity goals, in addition to economic and climate goals.

Thank you in advance for your support of HB 4112,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alicia Chapman', written in a cursive style.

Alicia Chapman (she/her)

Owner & Chief Executive Officer
Willamette Technical Fabricators