



February 21, 2025

Chair Nguyen
House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Written Testimony in Support of HB 3049 – Strengthening the OIA Program and Rural Economic Development

Dear Chair Nguyen and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO), in support of House Bill 3049 and the proposed changes to the Oregon Investment Advantage (OIA) program, which we believe will continue to drive economic growth and development in rural communities, such as Crook and Jefferson Counties, in our region.

The OIA program has been an essential tool for attracting investment and fostering business growth in economically distressed regions across Oregon. A few of the businesses that have been pivotal to our rural economies have benefited from the tax exemptions offered by this program, allowing them to reinvest in their operations, expand their workforce and create valuable jobs in rural areas.

We believe the changes proposed in HB 3049 will strengthen the OIA program by updating and simplifying wage calculation criteria and ensuring that only businesses making meaningful investments in the local economy are eligible for tax relief. This approach will incentivize companies to provide good-paying jobs that are sustainable in the long term, which will support not just business growth, but also long-term prosperity for our local workforce.

While there are concerns about existing administrative complexities that the bill does not address, we believe that the long-term benefit of this bill is a step in the right direction. The proposed changes will ensure that businesses receiving tax benefits under the OIA program are meeting the highest standards of contribution to Oregon's economy, encouraging more sustainable and equitable growth in rural communities. Additionally, the changes will help direct investments toward businesses that will have the greatest positive impact, creating high-quality jobs that attract a skilled workforce to rural areas.

In our region, where geographic access to resources and skilled labor can be more limited, the ability to offer competitive incentives to businesses considering expansion or relocation is crucial. By updating eligibility requirements and ensuring that businesses are making meaningful contributions, HB 3049 will help our rural communities remain competitive in attracting new investment, while fostering job growth that will have lasting economic impacts.

Commented [AF1]: Except for Aero Air/Erickson, I can recall only apple and facebook, so that you might go to all-sized companies.

Commented [AF2]: Bill doesn't do anything in such regards except to clarify, perhaps, the law

Commented [AF3]: This is really just OIA programs existing approach



We are confident that the passage of this bill will support rural Oregon's long-term economic recovery and growth. We urge the committee to pass HB 3049 and look forward to the continued benefits it will bring to our businesses and communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to advancing economic development in rural Oregon.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Lucas

Kelsey Lucas
Sr. Director of Business Development
Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO)

[Economic Development for Central Oregon](#) | kelsey@edcoinfo.com | (541) 213-3169 | edcoinfo.com