



International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, Transportation Workers

LOCAL UNION NO. 16

2379 N.E. 178th AVE., SUITE 16
PORTLAND, OREGON 97230-5957
PHONE: (503) 254-0123 • FAX: (503) 254-0157

Chair: Representative Grayber

March 26, 2025

Vice Chair: Representative Elmer

Vice Chair: Representative Munez

Members of the Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards:

RE: Yes, on HB-2688

HB-2688

My Name is Russ Benton. I'm a Regional Representative and Political Coordinator of SMART Local 16.

I am writing this letter on behalf of over 2,000 SMART Local 16 members in support of HB-2688. I have been working in the construction industry for the past 36 years. During that time, I've seen many advancements in technology that make it possible to complete incredibly large construction projects with fewer and fewer construction workers on site. For example, 3-D modeling, also known as BIM, allows for the review of an entire building along with starting the assembly process of the custom-building components, specifically for that facility, long before the construction ever starts.

This shift towards offsite fabrication offers several benefits, including enhanced safety measures, improved productivity, and increased efficiency. Unfortunately, some contractors have exploited an interpretation of the law that excludes most offsite work from prevailing wage protection. This has created a loophole that allows some contractors to exclude as much as 30% of hours for public work projects, often paying workers lower wages and benefits than those who perform the same work onsite.

This offsite assembly process of custom-building components has been increasing more and more over the years. For example, from my own personal experience, I have witnessed more and more hours that have traditionally been performed at the construction site have slowly migrated away to offsite assembly shops leaving Oregon workers with less and less prevailing wage hours covered under the current prevailing wage law. Hours that traditionally would have been performed onsite are now performed in offsite assembly shops.

HB-2688 would help recapture some of those hours, which in turn, will help increase local job opportunities for the workers living in the very communities where these projects are being built.

HB-2688 would close a loophole in the current Prevailing Wage law and create economic and education opportunities for the taxpayers and local communities, funding these projects. HB-2688 has the ability to increase tax revenue in Oregon by as much as 10 million dollars annually. The disposable income created by these projects gets recirculated in the local economy multiple times, which supports small local businesses and increases tax revenue for the local community area. Please join the membership of SMART Local 16 in support of HB-2688.

Sincerely

Russ Benton
Regional Representative/ Political Coordinator
Sheet Metal Workers
SMART Local 16
NWRC,