



April 4, 2025

Senator Kate Lieber
Representative Tawna Sanchez
Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Old Warm Springs Elementary School
1112 Wasco St.
Warm Springs

Ways and Means Co-Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber's 1,750 members and 8,500 business in Central Oregon, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in support of our FY 2025-27 budget priorities. We appreciate your consideration of these important investments for our community and understand the difficult choices that lie ahead.

Generating more workforce housing is a top initiative for the Bend Chamber of Commerce. In a recent survey of Bend and Redmond businesses 91 percent said that high housing and living costs were the main deterrent to attract and retain employees. 37 percent of businesses are losing revenue due to lack of labor directly related to housing costs.

Housing priorities:

Supporting a request for \$34 Million in infrastructure funds for the development of southeast Bend.

This funding will unlock the way to 5,500 units of housing, including 1,000 affordable housing units in complete neighborhoods. This is an unprecedented opportunity to close Bend's housing shortage for existing residents, fulfil our need for density and livable communities within our existing UGB and set us up on a path that makes 32,000 units in 20 years significantly more attainable.

Our community has been a state leader in developing workforce housing, with funding from the public and private sectors, including investments from the Bend Chamber. The development of the southeast area of Bend would allow one of our greatest opportunities to quickly build enough housing to nearly erase our current deficit with one initial infrastructure investment. The land is at the starting line to begin work but requires a significant initial investment in transportation, sewer and water to move forward.

- **HB 3031: This is a potential source, or partial source of the above funding request.** The measure directs the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority (IFA), which is budgeted within the Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD), to establish a housing infrastructure financing program through IFA to provide financial assistance, in the form of grants, loans, or forgivable loans, to cities, counties, special districts, and the nine federally recognized Indian tribes. The measure establishes the Housing Infrastructure Project Fund, which is continuously appropriated to OBDD to administer the proposed program. Interest earnings shall be credited

to the fund. We support the Governor's requested budget appropriation of \$100 million as a minimum investment in this fund.

- **HB 3090:** The measure directs the Housing and Community Services Department (HCSD) to amend its homeownership development incubator program to ensure the program funds the development of housing for households that earn up to 120% of the area median income and offers predevelopment funding for housing developers. The measure includes a one-time \$16.9 million General Fund appropriation to HCSD in the 2025-27 biennium to implement the measure.

Economic Development:

Industrial site-readiness to attract jobs & economic vitality

Central Oregon is among the state's fastest growing areas on a variety of measures, and promoting economic vitality, workforce development and innovation will lead to a vibrant business community. In particular, we support HB 2411 to allow for investments to incentivize industrial private investments and job generation in critical manufacturing sectors.

- **HB 2411: Industrial Site Readiness Loan Program \$40 million**

Workforce & Higher Education:

The OSU-Cascades Health Center

The OSU-Cascades campus is an economic engine and generator of vital workforce for the Central Oregon region, not only providing access to a high-quality post-secondary university, but also collaborative space for business and education intersects. We support their request for \$42 million in state support for the construction of a student health and recreation center on the Bend/Central Oregon campus. Facilities and services to support physical and mental health are common at universities, and the Cascades campus is the only public university campus without these essential facilities in Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our budget priorities, and we urge consideration as you set the budget for our next biennium.

Regards,



Katy Brooks
President & CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce

CC: Representative Jason Kropf
Representative Emerson Levy
Senator Anthony Broadman