



April 4, 2025

Representatives Lieber and Sanchez
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Letter of Support for funding requests via Oregon Budget HB 5006

Dear Chairs, Lieber and Sanchez and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding several funding bills and an appropriation related to the Oregon budget on behalf of Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO). EDCO is a private, non-profit organization serving the tri-county region of Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties whose mission is to promote sustained job growth and prosperous communities through traded-sector industry growth. We ask that you consider the following interests as a pathway to better economic outcomes for Oregon.

- **HB 2972 Workforce Re-entry**, Central Oregon's Deer Ridge Correctional institution was one of the pioneers of this programing by putting a WorkSource center on site to connect inmates to job and career opportunities post incarceration. Many of our employers have found skilled workers from this program and are willing to help these inmates find steady income.
- Oregon State University Cascades **\$42 million funding request** – our 4-year students need support for mental and physical health and further remediation and expansion of our campus. It is the only University in Oregon without this type of support facility. This request is matched by student fees, donors and planned debt capital.
- Industrial Lands Funding Bills, like **HB 2411**– Having the fastest growing economy in Oregon, Central Oregon continues to add back industrial lands to our inventory in response to the significant absorption this past decade. We have over 2,000 acres of available industrial zoned land, and most of it needs infrastructure, not just roads but important utility infrastructure, lift stations and larger piping. We have had significant economic development projects pass on land acquisition of a regionally recognized priority site in Redmond due to the cost of infrastructure – land owned by the Department of State Lands (DSL). Please support industrial lands infrastructure bills and include the requested \$40,000 million in funds this session.

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- We need new direct incentives, and existing legislation along with its recent amendments can now support additional key target industries. We hope that funding can be secured or diverted through **HB 2322 and its -1 amendments**, especially since Oregon is already losing jobs to states with more robust tools. We have a specific project that could use a boost that would create hundreds of high paying jobs in Oregon and attract nearly a billion dollars in capital investment in our region should this incentive be realized. We urge Oregon to introduce new programs and incentives that will help attract investment to help change the narrative presented in the recent *External Business Recruitment Study* conducted by OBDD and the University of Oregon. Please feel free to contact me or Representative Levy if you would like to learn more about this project.

We hope you will join us in supporting our requests for funding. If you have any questions regarding my comments, please feel free to reach out to me directly. We appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective.

Sincerely,

Jon Stark, CEO
Economic Development for Central Oregon

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