



OREGON STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY ASSESSORS

October 28th, 2021

To: Sophom Cheang, Director Business Oregon

CC: Nick Batz, Policy and Government Affairs Manager
Chris Cummings, Assistant Director, Economic Development
Bram Ekstrand – Oregon Department of Revenue Property Tax Administrator
Nathan Bigby – First VP, Oregon State Association of County Assessors
Mike Gorman – Second VP, Oregon State Association of County Assessors

RE: Enterprise Zones - Assessors and Business Oregon

County Assessors have enjoyed a good partnership with Business Oregon in administering Oregon's Enterprise Zone (EZ) program over the years. As both parties know, this is one of the more nuanced and complex property tax programs that engages zone sponsors, companies, the Oregon Dept. of Revenue, counties, and Business Oregon to achieve local economic benefits. The past few tax cycles have presented many challenges, even unprecedented ones. However, what many counties are addressing in this letter is an ask of Business Oregon to work with County Assessors to come to an agreement over our partnership and party responsibilities.

It has been apparent to County Assessors, especially to those with a larger portion of EZ accounts, that Business Oregon is asking for more data now than ever before. These data requests are oftentimes described as clarifying in nature; however, many requests, fall into the following categories:

1. Amend previous statutory reports submitted to DOR for info reported by companies after the initial report date.
2. Explanation of calculations that go beyond clarification and seem like more of an audit or debate.
3. Analysis of companies: what happened to them or their status—maybe a zone sponsor question.
4. A challenge of a company's report of investment cost.
5. A challenge of a county's estimate of tax savings.

These types of clarifying questions never seem to end with an email response; but they tend to draw further questions. The categories themselves are all addressed in the submitted reports to the DOR by each county, as required by ORS.

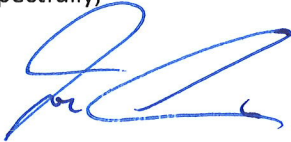
More detail could be provided that might help clarify this request. Counties seek to improve and clarify their relationship with Business Oregon. As previously mentioned, we would like to further our discussion from a reasonable perspective and achieve the following outcomes:

1. What data does Business Oregon need and when?
2. Why is this information needed?
3. Clarification between data and analysis. The former can reasonably be provided while the latter is more involved and unnecessary.

We appreciate Business Oregon putting together a workgroup earlier this year; unfortunately, this group has met infrequently and very little progress has been made at this point. Therefore, we would also request that Business Oregon staff refrain from sending correspondences to counties, zone sponsors, and others until those correspondences can be internally vetted and reviewed by others in Business Oregon for appropriateness prior to being broadcast to the wide variety of recipients. Currently some of these correspondences are overwhelming, confusing, very time consuming, and unfortunately in some cases creating negative impacts in relations.

It is our sincere desire to work collaboratively with Business Oregon and the other stakeholders to proactively address the needs of the various groups in a timely manner to create and maintain a positive partnership.

Respectfully,



Joe Davidson, President

Oregon State Association of County Assessors