

Submitter: Hazel Wheeler
On Behalf Of: Invest in Oregonians
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and members of the committee,

I am asking you to focus on our immediate needs in your state budget. Protect Oregon Now by prioritizing investments in our families and communities.

Actions from the White House and GOP Congress are enriching billionaires but creating real harm in our state: job losses, higher prices, and economic instability for everyday people. Oregonians need you to protect us by holding steady.

As you build the state budget, we call on you to reject any new Oregon tax breaks for corporations or the ultra-wealthy. Please continue to hold the line against cuts to the most critical basic services Oregonians all rely on, even as unelected Billionaires like Elon Musk threaten them from DC. Should the worst happen in the future, Oregon has reserves, but we should cross that bridge when we come to it.

I also urge you to prepare for any coming economic downturn or federal funding reductions by doing what we know works to keep families stable: strategically investing in our communities and giving Oregonians more opportunities to thrive.

Please prioritize a state budget which protects Oregonians.

Time and again, our leaders haven't delivered on making the tax burden equitable when it comes to corporations in Oregon. They are responsible for a lot of the damage on our roads due to heavy loads (and more traffic when it comes to so many goods being delivered at ones door). Corporations should not be receiving tax breaks when they are not good actors or good employers, period, full stop. Corporations should not be receiving tax breaks for any job that isn't full time, non-seasonal work. (I'm thinking of sports arenas, specifically, as well as corporations that tend toward only part-time employees to avoid paying insurance.) It's already the case that the average Oregonian pays far more taxes percentage-wise than corporations or the wealthy. We, the average Oregonians, don't have money to pay for lawyers to find loopholes or look into grant money or tax breaks to alleviate our costs. Take one case in point: Block 216, which Walt Bowen undertook to build the Ritz-Carlton here in Portland. This developer took advantage of Opportunity Zone tax breaks to build something no one wanted or ever asked for. Over 50 food cart vendors were displaced, many of them immigrant-owned small businesses. That the City Council chose to remove a vibrant draw to the area (and a beloved lunch and dinner outing for many people doing business downtown) via a Prosper Portland project that only

served the wealthy is outrageous. Add to this the funds that the city is owed due to a lack of promised affordable housing-- we can't keep catering to the wealthy and promising all the help to developers who are destroying what is good about our state. This is but one example of bad actors repeatedly being allowed tax breaks while harming the community. Frankly, I'm sick of it. Our state keeps having budget shortfalls, then giving out kickers, and tax breaks for the wealthy--- where is our state's funds going to come from? Make it make sense, please. Because it doesn't.

Thank you,

Hazel Wheeler