

# Testimony – In Support of HB 4084

## House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

Chair Nguyen, Vice Chairs Isadore, Skarlatos and members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is **Steve Curley**. I am the Redmond Director for Economic Development for Central Oregon and I'm here today in strong support of **House Bill 4084**.

This bill matters because it addresses a problem this committee hears about constantly—from employers, site selectors, ports, and local governments alike: **Oregon is losing projects not because we lack talent or opportunity, but because our systems are too slow, too uncertain, and too fragmented.**

HB 4084 tackles that head-on in three practical, business-focused ways.

### **First: Fast-track permitting for major projects.**

This is not about weakening standards. It's about coordination, accountability, and timelines. Right now, a large employer seeking to invest in Oregon may need approvals from multiple agencies with no single point of leadership and no shared schedule. HB 4084 fixes that by creating a Joint Permitting Council that brings agencies to the same table, with clear expectations and regular reporting.

For businesses making \$50 million, \$100 million, or \$150 million investments—depending on where they locate—time is money. Certainty matters. This bill sends a clear signal that Oregon is serious about competing for transformational projects while maintaining strong environmental and land-use protections.

### **Second: Industrial site readiness.**

Oregon simply does not have enough shovel-ready industrial land. Local governments and ports are stuck with upfront infrastructure costs—roads, utilities, environmental mitigation—long before a single job is created or a single tax dollar comes in.

The \$40 million investment in the Industrial Site Loan Fund is exactly the kind of smart, enabling investment this committee has long supported. It helps communities prepare sites *before* opportunities knock, rather than watching projects go to other states that are ready today.

### **Third: Modernizing enterprise zones.**

Enterprise zones remain one of Oregon's most effective economic development tools. According to Business Oregon's own impact study, these programs generate **\$29 in economic output for every \$1 abated** in standard enterprise zones, with billions in output and tens of thousands of jobs statewide.

HB 4084 updates these programs to reflect modern economic realities—allowing more flexibility, better alignment with local economic strategies, and clearer performance expectations—while keeping the focus on real outcomes: jobs, wages, and long-term tax base growth.

For this committee in particular, HB 4084 is about **helping Oregon businesses grow, helping small and mid-sized communities compete, and making sure the state is a partner—not a barrier—to investment.**

I urge your support for HB 4084 and appreciate your leadership on economic development issues critical to Oregon's future.

Thank you.

**PS. I would recommend evaluating the Fast Track Permitting levels, as the thresholds are too high.**

**In Central Oregon where the MSA includes the tri-county region of Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes Counties the \$150 million level is too high for projects in this region as that investment level is what is required for a project in the UGB of an MSA. So, it impacts communities outside of the Portland metro region. Considering the outlying rural areas in the MSA, this will deny these benefits to those businesses.**

Thank you.