
Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 4084

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

Thank you, Representative Nguyen, Co-Chairs, and all members of this committee.

My name is Mike Vanier, President of OMEP, the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and I am here today to strongly support House Bill 4084.

OMEP is a public-private, nonprofit management consulting organization serving hundreds of manufacturers every year across Oregon. Our work literally spans from Joseph to Burns to Bandon to Astoria, and everything in between. For more than three decades, we have worked side by side with manufacturers to help them grow, invest, hire, and compete.

Let me begin by sharing a quick story. Unfortunately, in this public setting I cannot share the company's name, but I would be happy to discuss it in person.

A few years ago, an Oregon food manufacturing company with two locations in the Portland metro area and one in Salem had the opportunity to partner with a national retailer to co-pack a private-label product. The company already owned its land and planned to build an additional cold storage warehouse of more than 100,000 square feet. This project would have created approximately 50 new jobs and driven significant demand across Oregon's agricultural and packaging supply chains.

Despite owning the land and facing no land-use issues, the permitting process took more than two years before the company believed the project might be viable. Ultimately, the national retailer walked away and partnered with a company outside the Northwest. This resulted in a loss of roughly \$30 million per year in revenue for the Oregon company, not counting the broader supply-chain impact or the 50 jobs that would have been created.

This is not an isolated case. It is one of many examples we see across the state.

Manufacturing is foundational to Oregon's economy. The sector employs more than 200,000 Oregonians, represents roughly 14 percent of our state's GDP, and generates nearly \$40 billion in annual economic output. These are some of the highest-paying jobs in our economy, anchoring communities in every corner of the state. When manufacturers are unable to expand or invest, Oregon loses far more than a single project.

House Bill 4084 represents a meaningful shift in how Oregon approaches economic development. Today, too many businesses are standing in the smoke, facing unclear processes, fragmented systems, and unpredictable timelines. This bill helps move us to the other side of the campfire, where clarity, coordination, and accountability exist.

FastTrack Permitting is a critical component. Manufacturers consistently tell us that slow and unpredictable permitting is one of the biggest barriers to growth. House Bill 4084 establishes clearer

timelines and better coordination across agencies. This is not about lowering standards. It is about transparency, predictability, and responsiveness.

The bill also invests in industrial site readiness, addressing Oregon's shortage of shovel-ready sites. Without prepared sites and infrastructure, manufacturers are often forced to look to other states. In addition, modernizing enterprise zones ensures these tools reflect how manufacturers grow today, supporting productivity, revenue growth, and job creation across urban and rural communities.

From OMEP's vantage point, House Bill 4084 helps create the conditions for modern manufacturing. This includes the adoption of advanced tools such as artificial intelligence that improve productivity, support better decision-making, and enable manufacturers to create modern, high-skilled, high-wage jobs. That is economic development. These are the kinds of jobs that allow Oregonians to build careers, not just find employment.

Members of the committee, House Bill 4084 is about competitiveness, accountability, and results. It recognizes that economic development is not theoretical. It either works in real time for real businesses, or those businesses go elsewhere. This bill moves Oregon in the right direction.

On behalf of the manufacturers we serve across this state, I respectfully urge your support of House Bill 4084. Thank you for your time and leadership.