Please Vote YES on Senate Bill 333

The availability of market-ready industrial sites is a key asset for areas hoping to expand or attract traded-sector jobs. However, many regions of the state lack an adequate supply of such sites. Even when land is zoned, planned and designated for future industrial jobs, significant capital investments (e.g., infrastructure, brownfield cleanup, wetland mitigation and site aggregation) may be required to make it market ready. Many local jurisdictions are unable to afford these investments or are not in a position to incur significant up-front costs by themselves.

In 2013, the Legislature addressed this problem by creating the Oregon Industrial Site Readiness Program. SB 246 authorized Business Oregon to offer partially forgivable loans or reimbursement of project costs to help public sector sponsors remove constraints to market readiness on regionally significant industrial sites in exchange for job creation commitments. These loans and reimbursements would be funded by a portion of the income taxes generated by new employment made possible by the project. However, the program has not been implemented due to technical flaws in its original design.

SB 333 provides several fixes to improve the workability of the program as well as its attractiveness to local governments and quality employers. The Industrial Site Readiness Coalition has worked with the appropriate state agencies to propose these changes.

The most significant changes in SB 333 include:

- The elimination of reporting requirements on employers. This change recognizes the fact that the loan or reimbursement agreement is between the public sector project sponsor and the state; the program provides no benefit to the employer. Wage data necessary for administering the program can be obtained from public agencies.
- The addition of job creation thresholds for participation in the program (thresholds are higher for urban areas than for rural areas).
- Allowing local sponsors to begin recovering a portion of their site readiness investments the year after jobs are created on a regionally significant industrial site, rather than after five years.

The potential economic benefit from successful traded-sector development (direct and indirect jobs, income and property tax revenues) that remains unrealized due to site constraints is significant. Growth in income tax revenues would make the state's general fund the largest beneficiary from an increase in traded-sector industrial jobs. By eliminating barriers to traded sector industrial development, SB 333 will benefit both the state and local governments.

We urge you to vote YES on Senate Bill 333.