



Eastern Oregon Border Board

Strengthening Our Region's Economic Future

Background on House Bill 2012

- Far eastern Oregon is economically depressed relative to the rest of Oregon and compared to thriving Idaho communities mere miles away.
- Far Eastern Oregon's growth is stagnant and losing businesses and residents to Idaho at a staggering rate.
- Neighboring Idaho's very different political landscape and policies create unique challenges for our region.
- HB 2012 created the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region, Board, and Fund to address these issues.

Border Region – At a Glance

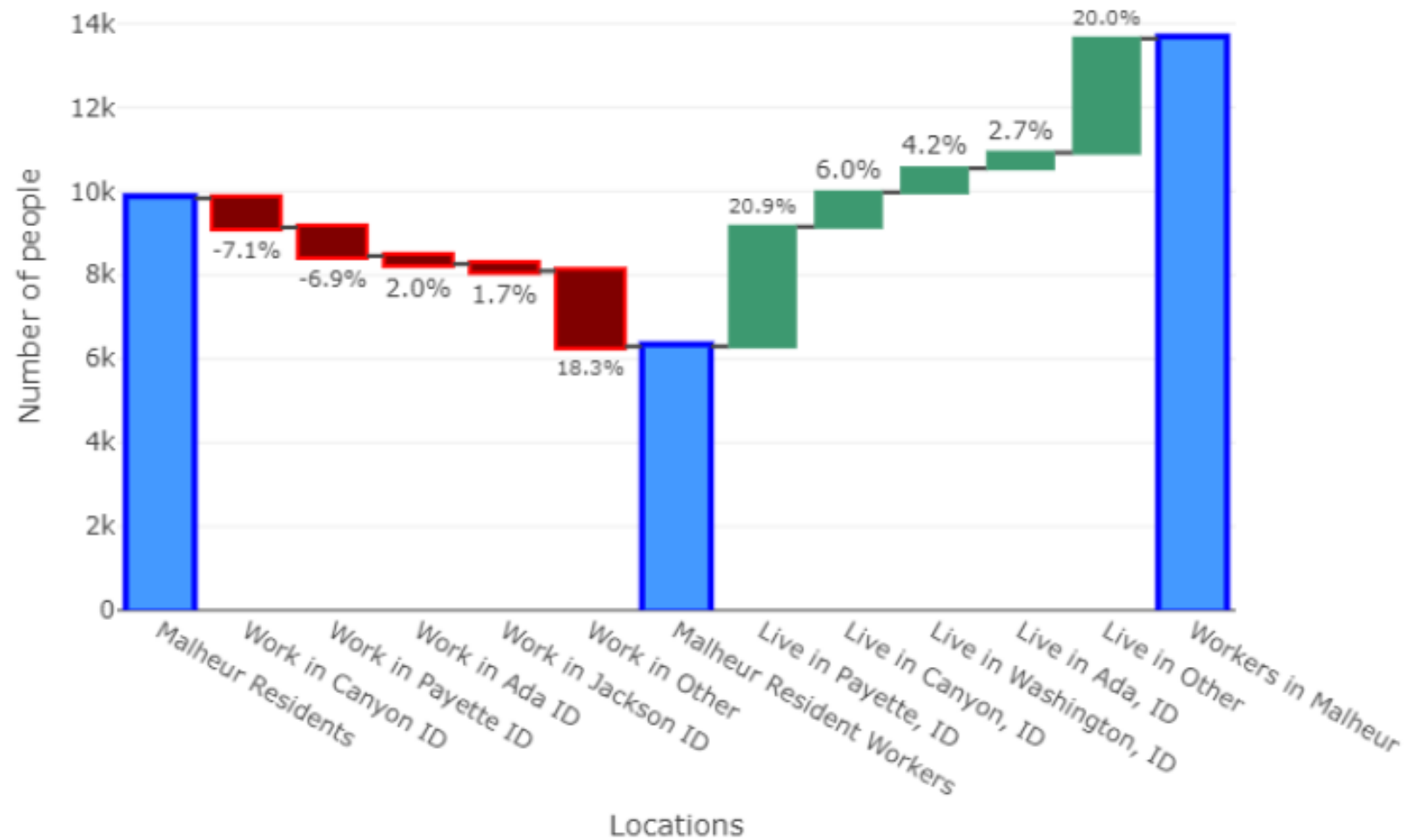


Eastern Oregon Border Region

- State of the Region -

- The property tax base, population, and residential development in the Border Region are stagnant while neighboring Idaho booms.
- The Border Region 'imports' a disproportionate majority of its workers.
- Snake River Correctional Institution, Oregon's largest prison, is located in the Border Region and was the largest state general funded public works project in state history.
- About 75% of SRCI's employees live in Idaho. The numbers are similarly astonishing in the local community college and Ontario school district.
- This dynamic is economically and socially disastrous.

Worker Flow: Malheur County



HB 2026

- Highlights -

- Gives residents of the Border Region a boost in applying for public employment in the region.
- Applicable only in the Border Region.
- Does not supplant qualification and merit-based hiring.
- Modeled after the existing veteran preference in Oregon.
- Compliant with applicable law.

HB 2026

-A2 Amendment

- Expands preference to all Malheur County residents.
 - Rationale: The local hiring pool includes some county residents who technically live outside the finite Border Region. Hiring those prospective employees would still meet HB 2026's goal of raising up the region.
- Eliminates the written explanation requirement of a public employer that does not end up hiring a resident applicant.
 - Rationale: This has proven practically challenging in the similarly worded veteran's preference statute.

HB 2026

- Risk of Inaction -

- The Eastern Oregon Border Region along the Idaho border has strong potential.
- The different laws, regulations, and perceptions of Oregon and Idaho have resulted in stagnancy in the Border Region while our Idaho neighbors thrive.
- A public employee resident hiring preference will help raise up the Border Region and its residents, as well as attract new residents.

CALL TO ACTION: HB 2026 is a critical part of the Border Board's work to improve the Border Region - we respectfully request your support of the bill.