



Written Testimony for the House Committee on Economic Recovery & Prosperity

February 2, 2021 Public Hearing on House Bill 2345

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On behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), representing Oregon's 36 county governments, I offer the following comments in strong support of House Bill 2345.

The Oregon Rural Service Center within Oregon Business Development Department creates a much-needed resource for small, rural, and frontier communities to learn about, apply for, and manage grants and other funding opportunities to support local workforce and economic development.

According to a recent informal survey on county grant writing programs and capacity conducted by Curry County, 19 of 22 responding counties indicated that they do not have dedicated grant writing staff and identify this lack of capacity as a significant gap in workforce and economic development efforts.

Without expertise and staff resources, small and frontier counties struggle to even identify opportunities, let alone prepare applications and manage funding if it is awarded. This means that the funds available through state and federal economic and workforce development grant programs are simply not reaching many of Oregon's communities. House Bill 2345 creates an opportunity to connect those funds to Oregonians.

On behalf of our small, frontier, and rural counties and communities, the Association of Oregon Counties urges the committee's strong support.

Thank you.

**UNITED COUNTIES. UNITED OREGON.**

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