

From the office of
Representative Mark Owens
House District 60

House Bill 2173
Owens Written Testimony
Hearing Date: 3/4/2021
Committee: House Economic Recovery & Prosperity

Colleagues,

House Bill 2173 was drafted on behalf of county commissioners who had approached me wanting better accountability and partnership between the counties and the Regional Solutions Program, as was originally intended.

The Regional Solutions Program was created as a cooperative arrangement between the state and local governments to locally identify priorities, solve problems, and seize opportunities to get projects done. It was originally intended to be a full partnership with the Governor's Office, including AOC oversight for program and financial support.

Many years ago, counties agreed to financially support the Regional Solutions Program by paying for half of the cost of the salaries and benefits of the Regional Solutions Coordinators by way of deduction from the top of their county share of lottery distributions to counties.

However, currently, the Regional Solutions Coordinators have become more like Governor's Office employees, and less responsive to the intended original partnership and ongoing needs of Oregon's counties. As a result, Oregon counties want some level of assurance that the Regional Solutions Coordinators are performing the intended job functions under the Program, including a say in how and when they are redirected to other work.

House Bill 2173 will continue that strong partnership while better defining the roles of the relationship. It gives AOC's Board of Directors the authority to allocate the funds from the counties to the program. It prevents the regional solutions coordinators from being redirected or utilized for other purposes, and the coordinators official work must be mutually agreed upon by the Governor and the AOC Board of Directors. The bill also directs that any moneys transferred that are not used for funding regional solutions coordinators shall be refunded to the counties.

In short, House Bill 2173 will provide the accountability Commissioners expect for their portion of the regional solutions funding. I urge your aye vote.



Representative Mark Owens
House District 60