

March 10, 2021

To: Co-Chairs Beyer and Gomberg and Members of the Joint Ways & Means Committee
Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
From: Paloma Sparks, Oregon Business and Industry
RE: OBI Testimony in Support of HB 5015, BOLI Budget

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

OBI is Oregon's most comprehensive business association representing over 1,600 businesses that employ over 250,000 people. We represent multiple sectors and serve as the state's Retail and Manufacturing Councils.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of BOLI's budget. OBI applauds Commissioner Hoyle's continued focus on modernization and expansion of resources for employees and employers.

In just the last seven years, Oregon employers have faced the challenge of implementing many complex employment laws. These laws have put heavy burdens on employers trying to implement them while also running their businesses. BOLI provides an essential resource by providing guidance about these laws and clarifying employer obligations.

In addition to these major new laws, employers are constantly implementing other large and small changes to labor and employment laws at the federal and state level. Employers rely on BOLI's Technical Assistance program as a resource as we update handbooks and procedures. With so many changes in employment law, employers need assistance now more than ever. Never has that proven truer than in the last year when so many employers turned to Technical Assistance for advice about final paychecks and return to work provisions. We urge you to preserve all funding for Technical Assistance as an essential resource for businesses as they attempt to regain their footing.

A functioning agency, including enforcement, is essential to Oregon businesses. As conscientious employers, we support the efforts of the agency to hold wrongdoers responsible and ensure workers' rights are protected. We appreciate the work the agency has done in recent years to take a balanced approach to improve services to both employers and employees.

Thank you for your consideration, OBI urges your support of HB 5015.