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Oregon State Association
of Electrical Workers



March 11, 2021

Senate Bill 639 Will Undercut Responsible Bidding & Apprenticeships in Oregon

Members of the Senate Committee on Business & Labor:

As representatives of labor organizations and construction contractor associations, we strongly oppose SB 639. Senate Bill 639 will add confusion to public construction contracts in Oregon and undercut standards for public works.

Oregon Prevailing Wage laws ensure that fair wages and benefits are provided to workers on public works projects, and also help responsible contractors stay competitive in the bidding process. Prevailing wage additionally helps ensure that our Apprenticeships throughout the state are supported by the work done on public construction. At a time when the state desires to see more use of apprentices in construction this bill moves in the opposite direction.

Raising the threshold for triggering prevailing wage will exclude many smaller public projects around the state from being a part of this high quality work. These are the types of projects many smaller contractors rely on for work and for developing their apprentices.

In addition to the impacts this will have on local workforces and contractors in Oregon, an ever changing threshold set by DAS will create confusion in bid requirements on public projects. The potential for new thresholds annually is an additional level of complexity for contractors and will continue to hurt competitiveness over time.

Due to the adverse impacts on Oregon's workers, businesses, and communities, we strongly urge you to oppose Senate Bill 639.

Thank you,

Oregon State Association of Electrical Workers

UA Local 290 Plumbers & Steamfitters

Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 16

Plumbing & Mechanical Contractors Association

Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors National Association, Oregon & SW Washington

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