

Date: February 4th, 2021

To: Chair and Members of the Committee on
From: Scott Bruun, OBI
RE: OBI Testimony in Support of HB 2461

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue for Oregon families, workers and businesses. My name is Scott Bruun and I am the Director of Tax & Fiscal Policy for Oregon Business & Industry. OBI is Oregon's largest business association representing approximately 1,600 businesses which employ nearly 330,000 people.

HB 2461 is an important bill which would create an emergency stockpile of goods, including personal protective equipment, materials to manufacture PPE within Oregon, contagious disease testing equipment, and other critical supplies related to other types of disasters including wildfires and earthquakes.

Importantly, this bill also creates a state-level entity to assist manufacturing partners in Oregon toward streamlining contracting, resource procurement and regulatory guidance and support.

OBI strongly supports HB 2461. The crises which we have all seen and experienced over the last year have clearly demonstrated the need for forward-looking and forward-thinking leadership. HB 2461 provides that leadership, and we are grateful to Representatives NATHANSON, EVANS and SCHOUTEN for bringing this forward.

Last year Oregon faced critical shortages in PPE and COVID testing supplies. Given unprecedented demands on the global supply chain, Oregon was simply unable to fill those supply needs. Countless healthcare, education and - critical for us – industry employers – were unable to get the PPE and tests necessary to maintain operations and continue moving forward. It's not an overstatement to say that we were stranded and at least partially paralyzed. These painful shortages and our utter dependence on outside suppliers hurt Oregonians and hurt Oregon businesses in every part of the state.

HB 2461 will help every Oregonian, including every Oregon business, by ensuring that we are much less vulnerable to future emergencies and disruptions. It will help keep businesses open. It will financially help those Oregon businesses, of course, that do the manufacturing and distribution. And it will help the employees of every business in Oregon, and those employees' families, by helping to keep people safe, secure and able to work.

We can't predict everything that may happen in the future, but we can prepare. HB 2461 does just that, and **OBI urges your support.**

Contact: Scott Bruun, OBI, scottbruun@oregonbusinessindustry.com