



April 21, 2021

Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Co-Chair Senator Betsy Jonson
Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner-Hayward
Co-Chair Representative Dan Rayfield
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for House Bill 2820

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward and Rayfield:

The Portland Business Alliance (the Alliance) is greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce and represents the largest, most diverse network of businesses in the region. The Alliance advocates for business at all levels of government to support commerce, community health, and the region's overall prosperity. We represent over 2,000 members, from 27 counties, 13 states, and virtually every industry sector. More than 80% of our members are small businesses.

I write to express our strong support for HB 2820, otherwise known as the Prosperity 2000 Act. This bill leverages federal, State and local efforts to respond to those most impacted by COVID-19 and creates a sustainable, statewide model to move people from poverty to prosperity.

The COVID pandemic has resulted in the steepest economic downturn since the great depression. While the full impact of the pandemic has yet to unfold, Black, Indigenous and People of Color, rural residents, women, immigrants, disabled individuals, younger, less educated, and lower-income workers have disproportionately suffered from the health and economic devastation caused by the pandemic.

HB 2820 creates a program to support 2,000 Oregonians most severely impacted by the COVID-19 economic crisis to re-career into high-wage, high-demand occupations. In partnership with the Department of Human Services, State resources will be invested through Local Workforce Development Boards to serve SNAP recipients with training and placement into middle-income jobs.

This investment leverages the capacity and resources of Oregon's public workforce system (WorkSource Oregon), generates federal matching funds to grow and sustain the program, and launches a focused effort to support workers, businesses and communities across Oregon who have been most impacted by the COVID pandemic.

The Portland region's business community is committed to working to build an economic recovery that is more equitable, resilient, and prosperous for all Oregonians, especially historically underserved communities like East Multnomah County. We strongly believe HB 2820 could be critical to achieving this strong and equitable recovery. We hope that passage of this bill is just a start as we know that more than 2,000 Oregonians need the job training and placement support programs that will be funded by HB 2820.

We urge your support for House Bill 2820.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jon Isaacs (*he/him*)

Vice President, Government Affairs

PORTLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE

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