

Chair Barbara Smith-Warner, Vice Chair Christine Drazan, Vice Chair Paul Holvey, and members of the Committee, I am submitting written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 493A.

I am in a unique position, serving as both a current board member for a small, rural K-12 District in eastern Umatilla County, as well as serving in a professional capacity as a Construction Project Manager, working primarily with public agencies throughout eastern Oregon on capital construction projects; the cost implications are significant, as the passage of SB 493A would result in a dramatic increase in the Prevailing Wage Rate (PWR) in Oregon, a region which is already experiencing rapid cost increases and pricing volatility in the marketplace.

As Public Agencies, particularly rural K-12 Districts, are seeking to complete improvements to their respective facilities, the anticipated increase in labor costs likely puts many Districts in a difficult position to table or postpone projects; for many, with several years of pre-construction work in process, the District has already engaged with their respective community, sharing anticipated costs to the work in the hope of putting forth a bond to fund the projects. Those Districts with the “wheels already in motion” will face a challenging decision to make, as the impact of SB493A will reduce their purchasing power as labor costs escalate.

For clarity, I am supportive of Prevailing Wage Rates – in rural Oregon, our tradesmen and tradeswomen provide family wage jobs, the backbone of our communities – however the Prevailing Wage Rates should be based upon an average wage, and not from a singular Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) or similar. This creates the ability for a single CBA to have the potential to dramatically impact the PWR across the entire State.

I urge you to not pass SB 493A as currently presented.

Thank you

Scott Rogers
2020/2021 Chair, Athena-Weston School District Board of Directors
2021 President Elect, Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA)