



Oregon School Employees Association

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April 28, 2021

House Committee on Revenue
Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Chair

Dear Chair Nathanson and members of the committee:

The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) represents more than 22,000 workers in nearly all levels of public education, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, ESDs and community colleges. OSEA members perform many of the thankless tasks that keep Oregon public schools safe and functional for students, administrators and teachers.

With many of our members living and working in smaller and more rural communities across Oregon, OSEA is very attuned to the need for economic development and growth in less advantaged parts of the state. We are also dedicated defenders of Oregon's State School Fund, which remains well below the funding level that the Quality Education Commission regularly identifies as necessary to provide the kind of schools that we expect for our kids. Tax policy like enterprise zones is worthy of attention on both counts, as local property tax exemptions draw revenue away from all of Oregon's schools because of the equalization elements of the state distribution formula.

OSEA is very pleased to hear, and strongly supportive of, amendments that better align House Bill 2343 with the unique circumstances that the pandemic has created. ORS 285C.203 already offers an "economic downturn" protection for employers in enterprise zones, and it's important to understand exactly why that is inadequate to this moment for most or all of these employers.

We are also very pleased to hear, and strongly supportive of, having a broad and thoughtful conversation in the not too distant future about Oregon's enterprise zones program, its effectiveness in achieving economic development in the communities that need it, and ensuring that its impacts are not undercutting critical state priorities in other areas, such as education.

OSEA strongly urges the committee to adopt amendments that will make House Bill 2343 more carefully aligned with the current situation, and we look forward to joining in a thoughtful conversation about improvements to our enterprise zone policy.

Thank you for your attention,

Bob Estabrook
Government Relations Specialist