

May 18, 2021

House Committee On Economic Recovery and Prosperity
Representative John Lively, Chair
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Lively and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 623 A. The City of Gresham supports policies for workforce training, particularly for residents that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and the economic downturn.

The pandemic has resulted in one of the steepest economic downturns since the great depression. Eighty-six percent of workers that lost jobs in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic earned less than \$40,000 a year. Oregonians most impacted by the economic downturn are Communities of Color, women, younger, less educated and lower-income workers. The crisis has also exposed deficiencies in our programs and systems.

SB 623 A provides a framework to ensure the state workforce system is responsive to our communities most impacted by the pandemic. SB 623 A aligns state and local goals, increases monitoring, transparency and accountability of public workforce investments, and improves community engagement. It calls for a 45-day plan to ensure that the needs of those most impacted by the pandemic are prioritized by the public workforce system. It also requires an evaluation that will increase transparency, engagement, and local responsiveness. This legislation offers a holistic approach to bring partners together and provides mechanisms to scale best practices.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the lives and economic opportunity for Oregon's residents. Improvements to our public workforce system is a necessary and important component to the statewide response and recovery on this pandemic.

We ask your support for SB 623 A.

Sincerely,



Brian Monberg
Government Affairs Manager