



TECHNOLOGY
ASSOCIATION
OF OREGON

February 23, 2021

House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity
900 Court St, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Cate and Krofp, and members of the committee,

We are submitting this letter in support of HB 2820 on behalf of the Technology Association of Oregon (TAO). TAO is the force behind the regional tech industry—supporting entrepreneurs, connecting peers and decision makers, and helping establish the Northwest as a global hub for innovation. We work with over 500 tech and tech-enabled companies throughout Oregon, ranging in size from one-person startups to some of the largest tech companies in the world. We know that equitably building a skilled and digitally literate workforce is key to growing our innovation economy. To the end, TAO supports HB 2820 establishing the Prosperity 1,000 Pilot Program and providing career coaching, occupational training, and job replacement services for low-income job seekers who reside in areas of concentrated poverty across the state.

House Bill 2820 creates the opportunity for individuals experiencing poverty to receive the skills and training they need to enter Oregon’s rapidly growing technology sector, while also providing for the wrap around services that oftentimes create barriers to entry. By passing HB 2820, the legislature would create a pathway for historically marginalized individuals to enter the skilled job field, ultimately increasing the diversity of Oregon’s workforce.

In light of the COVID-19, TAO believes that it’s imperative that the legislature allocate funding and support for the communities that have been hit hardest by the economic fallout of the pandemic. House Bill 2820 leverages state dollars to direct federal funding towards the communities who are in the greatest need of support and does so in a way that creates pathways out of poverty.

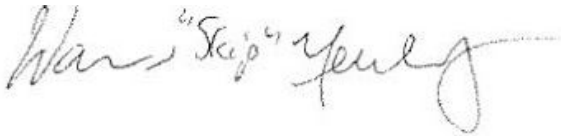
TAO is committed to the advancement of equity within the tech community and has focused on increasing the diversity of its members, its board of directors and its programming. Through various programming partnerships TAO has:

- Created a women-in-tech cohort engaging 200+ women statewide at all career levels
- Highlights statewide BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ technologists monthly through the *I Am Tech Oregon* series

- Bridged the rural urban divide by providing technologists and technology solutions to producers, growers and farmers in the Mid-Willamette Valley
- Launched a statewide employee resource group for Black technologists and LGBTQIA+ technologists convening in 2021

For these reasons, TAO respectfully encourages the members of the House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity to vote in support of HB 2820 as we build the state's inclusive, innovation economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Skip Newberry". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Skip Newberry
President & CEO, Technology Association of Oregon