

February 23, 2021

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

Dear Chair Lively and Members of Committee,

I am writing to express the City of Gresham’s support for HB 2820.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the lives and economic opportunities for Oregon residents. The City of Gresham and East County residents have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19,<sup>1</sup> with case rates that are higher than Multnomah County overall and higher than virtually anywhere else in the state. For example, one East County zip code—97233—has a COVID-19 rate (750 per 10,000) that doubles the rate of Multnomah County (334 per 10,000) and represents nearly 10% of the total cases in Multnomah County (3,035 of 31,182). Gresham is one of the most diverse communities in the state, and communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic—more than half the residents of the aforementioned 97233 zip code are people of color. The pandemic has also impacted low-income communities, and Gresham has a poverty rate significantly higher than the Portland Metro region.

The economic dislocation caused by the pandemic has made workforce development funding of imperative importance. The Prosperity 1,000 Pilot Program offers the opportunity to provide coaching, training, and job placement to address systematic inequities in East Multnomah County. Reducing poverty in East Multnomah County has the potential to make a meaningful impact on poverty in the state as a whole, as there are more total residents living in poverty in East Multnomah County than within the twenty-four Oregon counties outside the Willamette Valley combined. The City of Gresham is committed to policies like HB 2820 that will begin to address historic disparities.

The City of Gresham works with many partners to create economic opportunity for our residents. We urge you to support the workforce training that HB 2820 can bring to our community.

Sincerely,



Brian Monberg  
Government Affairs Manager

<sup>1</sup> <https://projects.oregonlive.com/coronavirus/cases-by-zip>