

Representative Susan McLain

Oregon House District 29



February 28, 2022

Members of the House Committee on Revenue

Re: Support for Senate Bill 1524 A

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Pham and Reschke, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my support for SB 1524A, which passed unanimously out of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee and 23-2 off the Senate Floor with strong support from local governments, the Hillsboro School District, statewide and local economic development groups, and legislators on both sides of the aisle. A key component of this bill extends the sunset on an important economic development tool for my district, the Gain Share program, until 2030.

The program is critical for my district and is designed to benefit communities across the state, both urban and rural, that invest in new businesses and jobs by utilizing the Strategic Investment Program. A small portion of the state income tax revenue from those new jobs is then returned to local governments through Gain Share to support local priority projects that amplify economic opportunities created by large, traded-sector investments.

It's important to note that the bill does not make any changes to the program. The program was revised back in 2015 by a diverse coalition to ensure more equitable distribution across the state. It was then reauthorized by a wide, bipartisan margin and I am hopeful this Legislature will see the same benefit to our local communities.

In my district, Gain Share funds a variety of community projects – like the City of Hillsboro's high-speed broadband utility HiLight - which helps close the digital divide that we know impacts low-income students and families the most. Other Gain Share projects in Washington County go toward boosting tourism and recreation, addressing poverty, developing affordable housing, and improving safety throughout our growing transportation system.

If we don't reauthorize the Gain Share program this year, local governments like those in my district won't have the certainty they need to continue a strong economic recovery as we climb out of the pandemic. They need to be able to count on every possible dollar to make the best use out of these tools we have available to us. Additionally, local governments have an opportunity this year to capitalize on the recent Bipartisan Infrastructure and Jobs Act that passed last fall. Our partners at the local level require financial certainty to best leverage those funds, and reauthorizing Gain Share is an important component.

We have an opportunity this session to bring certainty and stability to the program. On behalf of my constituents in urban and rural Oregon, I encourage you to pass SB 1524A.

Sincerely,

Susan McLain

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