



Eastern Oregon Border Board

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House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
Public Hearing, February 14, 2023

Testimony in support of HB 2410

On behalf of the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board, I respectfully submit this testimony in support of HB 2410 and funding for the Ontario Recreation District's peer center project.

The Border Region is defined in ORS 284.771 and includes the cities of Ontario, Vale, Nyssa, the immediately surrounding areas, and a populated twenty mile stretch along the Snake River that separates Oregon and Idaho in Malheur County. A strong potential exists for the communities on the Oregon side of the Idaho border, but the region has experienced stagnant growth, economic decline, and workforce challenges in recent years while the neighboring communities of Idaho have seen significant development. The very different laws and policies of the two states have resulted in a disadvantage for the Border Region, exacerbating the challenges already present for rural communities. This includes opportunities and facilities for youth in the Border Region.

The Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board (Border Board) was created by the 2018 Oregon Legislature to advance policies, projects, and programs that address and overcome these unique challenges. The empowering statute authorizes the Border Board to make grants and loans supporting economic and workforce development in the region; to seek waivers or exemptions from state laws, rules, and regulations that inhibit growth; and to advocate for legislation tailored to the region's unique needs.

Since its inception, the Border Board has continuously evaluated the root causes of the challenges impairing success in the region. The board has identified social poverty as interrelated to economic poverty. Accordingly, the board's programs and advocacy efforts are carefully and deliberately focused on addressing these identified root causes. Lack of community amenities, youth engagement, and mentoring are among the recurring issues identified. The Border Board commends the Ontario Recreation District's efforts to address these issues through its programming and supports HB 2410 as a way to do so with more efficacy.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawna Peterson, Executive Director
Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board

