



March 2, 2023

**TO:** Members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

**FR:** Derek Sangston, Oregon Business & Industry

**RE:** Opposition to HB 2650

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Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, Vice-Chair Tran, members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans. For the record, I'm Derek Sangston, policy director and counsel with Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2650. While acknowledging the value that diversity adds to the legislative process, OBI opposes HB 2650 as drafted.

HB 2650, in effort to include those traditionally excluded from the legislation process, defines "informal workgroups" and "task forces" in a way that they likely become a much less used means to craft legislation. The bill would place restrictions on the membership of a valid workgroup or task force and require them to meet at a time convenient outside of not just one's job, but also their responsibilities as parents, students, or any other community activity.

While each is desirable, those requirements will not always align with the legislative schedule, which at times requires workgroups to form on tight deadlines. The membership of them includes those who are able to show up and at times that are not convenient. When this occurs, OBI fears HB 2650 would cause legislators and agencies to avoid forming an informal workgroup and bypass the value they provide in crafting, evaluating, and critiquing pending legislation altogether.

OBI also had concerns that HB 2650 would appropriate funds to pay for members of informal workgroups and task forces without having a subsequent referral to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means and is happy to hear a subsequent would be added if the bill is to move forward. While it may be a good use of public funds to encourage more diverse participation in informal workgroups and task forces, that use must be balanced with other important uses like funding for education, public safety, housing, and health care.

Thank you for your consideration.

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