



May 9, 2023

Chair Kathleen Taylor
Senate Committee on Labor and Business
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 3572

Dear Chair Taylor and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 3572. My name is Alicia Chapman, and I am the owner and CEO of Willamette Technical Fabricators in Portland. My company is a COBID-certified woman-owned, minority-owned, disadvantaged small business enterprise. We are also a certified Oregon Benefit Company. We build custom complex metal fabricated components for transportation and clean energy infrastructure, including bridges & hydropower dams, and we are developing innovative solutions to help Oregon become more resilient and energy-independent. As a certified benefit company, we are committed to the quadruple bottom line of people, planet, purpose, and profit. We provide high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers to the communities who need them most, specifically supporting women, people of color, and people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system, and providing them with on-the-job training to be able to have a positive and permanent impact in their own communities.

House Bill 3572 will give Oregon small businesses that are also Oregon Benefit Companies like us, a sustainable advantage when seeking contracts through the Oregon State procurement office. Whether supporting ODOT to ensure our bridges are ready to withstand a major earthquake, or supporting the Port of Portland's dredge operations to ensure a clear path for goods from across the state to reach the Pacific Ocean, we are constantly faced with difficult tradeoffs related to procuring locally sourced and recycled materials and providing our employees with competitive wages and progressive benefits. Prioritizing businesses that share these values and that make deliberate efforts to minimize our impact on the environment and to create a more equitable economy, inevitably results in tradeoffs that may reduce short-term costs savings in order to maximize long-term benefits for everyone. Providing businesses like ours with a "buffer" to help account for those costs, will allow Benefit Companies to better compete with businesses who have put profit above all else, and provide Oregon taxpayers with significant long-term returns on this nominal up-front investment.

I see significant overlap between this bill and the values that Oregon has already codified through the Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity, or COBID, that certifies and prioritizes women-, minority-, and veteran-owned companies and emerging small businesses. This bill does not require any prioritization of benefit companies, only that state contracting agencies *may* grant preference to them, up to a 5% contract value, essentially allowing for

extra credit for benefit companies when competing against firms with comparable qualifications and cost proposals. I am hopeful that this option will result in greater opportunities for my business and for other businesses that share our values, including some of those within the vast majority of Oregon businesses owned by white males that do not qualify under COBID. The potential for a sustainable advantage would incentivize such businesses to commit to more than just maximizing shareholder returns, consider the externalities of their operations, and reduce the untold “downstream” costs of less sustainable business practices that are disproportionately born by low-income, BIPOC, indigenous, and rural communities, as well as by future generations. Let’s be clear, the distinction between a certified Benefit Company and other businesses is not merely how they choose to organize their articles of incorporation, but an audited and independently assessed commitment to people and planet. Prioritizing these companies will also signal to entrepreneurs and businesses considering expanding their operations into Oregon, that this is a place where they can conduct business with government and industry partners who care about sustainability, and help drive economic growth for all Oregonians. Thank you for your support for this impactful legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alicia Chapman', with a stylized, cursive script.

Alicia Chapman

Owner & Chief Executive Officer

Willamette Technical Fabricators