



February 6, 2024

Representative Lively, Chair  
House Committee on Higher Education  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Support for HB 4154**

Chair Lively and members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

The 2023 legislative session included an early focus on recommendations from the Semiconductor Competitiveness Task Force. We appreciate the effort to enact SB 4. It is a great start to implementing the plan recommended by the Task Force. Yet there is significant unfinished business that we must complete in order to position Oregon to lead the United States in semiconductor manufacturing into the future, just as we have for the last few decades. HB 4154 represents one critical component of the Task Force recommendations that was discussed last session but not completed.

Oregon's leadership in semiconductor manufacturing has resulted in a strong and skilled workforce, and to be sure, our skilled workforce provides a competitive advantage when competing for investments between states. However, we must continue to invest in our workforce and in our research capacity in order to secure our competitive advantage into the future. HB 4154 would be a very significant investment in Oregon's future workforce and research capabilities.

The City of Hillsboro has been focused on growing our semiconductor and advanced manufacturing workforce pipeline as a component of our broader economic development strategy. An example of our work is the Advanced Manufacturing Training and Education Collaborative of Hillsboro (AM-TECH). AM-TECH is a public/private partnership that includes local government, K-12 education, community college, private industry, and community-based organizations. AM-TECH acts as a steering committee to assist and guide workforce initiatives in two categories: hiring and sourcing and technical skills training. It also serves as a platform for industry partners to share current workforce trends and needs, which our programs can then support directly. It is a successful model that can be replicated in other parts of the state and expanded in the Silicon Forest.

Given our close partnership with the Hillsboro School District, and their success as a leader in workforce development through their first in the state certified Youth Apprenticeship Program, we want to ensure they are eligible for grant funding through HB 4154. Although the language of the measure does not explicitly call out K-12, our understanding is that references to educational institutions in section 1 of the bill, and references to STEM education in section 3 of the bill, are intended to be inclusive of K-12 educational partners.

With HB 4154, the legislature has an opportunity to continue making progress on implementing the plan developed by the Semiconductor Competitiveness Task Force. Part of supporting and growing our semiconductor industry is making sure Oregonians have knowledge of the opportunity it provides for low-barrier, family wage jobs, and that our workforce training programs are responsive to industry

needs. Another part is ensuring Oregon continues to develop the intellectual capacity needed to support cutting edge research in our institutions of higher education. HB 4154 addresses all of those pieces.

We urge your support for passing HB 4154 and making a needed investment in Oregon's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andy Smith  
Government Relations Manager