

Paul L Evans
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Co-Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee, Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Joint Transportation Committee
House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

January 21, 2025

The Honorable Julie Fahey, Speaker, Oregon House of Representatives
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Speaker Fahey:

The letter emphasizes the critical nature of a robust engagement policy between the fifty states (and four territories) and the nation of Taiwan (Republic of China). It was signed by the senior policy experts associated with the US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Commerce, and most importantly, the US Department of State.

At present, twenty-four (24) US states and two (2) territories have permanent trade centers/offices in Taiwan. Several states employ more than ten (10) full-time personnel focused solely upon building stronger commercial, cultural, and educational exchange. Most of these states are not geographically located along the Pacific Rim. All of them, in conversations held over the past eighteen months, believe the placement of permanent personnel has significantly increased trade.

As you know, since August 2023, a small group of legislators from both chambers, from both parties, have been working closely with the Taiwanese government on increasing opportunities for mutual coordination of bilateral partnerships in agriculture, education (mostly focused upon post-secondary), high technology, resilience training, and shipping. This work has been in direct cooperation with our federal partners (Senators Merkley, Wyden, and Congresswoman Hoyle).

We are at a critical point in rebuilding a strategic relationship. House Bill 2756 (attached) serves as an instrument to take the next logical step (in Taiwan, and in Vietnam – a project that is similarly “in the works” – in coordination with the US State Department and our federal partners). Over the past four months we have accelerated efforts, including a visit by Taiwanese government and resilience leaders this past November.

Right now, Oregon has a unique advantage despite the absence of a trade center (a function we abandoned in 2009 because of budget cuts forced upon Oregon from the Great Recession). The letter is provided to assuage any concerns over past, present, and/or future engagement with Taiwan. It supports the actions we have undertaken, and it outlines the potential value a permanent trade center provides states that make the investment of talent, time, and treasure.

In conclusion, please review at your convenience. Please recognize the opportunities at hand, and please consider helping advance the establishment of permanent trade centers in Taiwan and Vietnam as part of a phased trade investment initiative. If you have any questions or require more information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Respectfully,

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October 8, 2024

Dear Governor:

We are writing to help facilitate your state's cooperation with Taiwan. The Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, and Department of State regularly receive questions about how U.S. state and local governments can conduct outreach to Taiwan. We aim to explain how expanding your state's relationship with Taiwan in areas such as trade, education, investment, and tourism is fully compatible with, and supports, U.S. policy and can be beneficial to your state.

Our Departments encourage cooperation with Taiwan and stand ready to help state and local governments navigate questions of nomenclature and protocol. We have attached information about the U.S.-Taiwan unofficial relationship, contact information for the Department of State's office that oversees policy engagement with Taiwan, and contact information for the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), the non-profit corporation that carries out the U.S. unofficial relationship with Taiwan pursuant to the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA).

For decades, the U.S. one China policy—guided by the TRA, the three U.S.-China Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances—has enabled the U.S. government's unofficial relations with Taiwan to flourish while allowing the United States to maintain diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Consistent with our policy, the U.S. government refers to Taiwan as "Taiwan." The U.S. one China policy encourages commercial, cultural, educational, people-to-people, and other engagement with Taiwan.

Taiwan is the United States' eighth-largest trading partner and seventh-largest market for agricultural exports. Visitors from Taiwan are eligible for visa-free travel to the United States through the Visa Waiver Program and may apply to participate in the Global Entry program for a streamlined arrivals process at U.S. airports. Taiwan is also the sixth-largest source of international students in the United States. State and local governments are well-positioned to deepen U.S. economic and cultural ties with Taiwan in ways that benefit their residents.

Taiwan is a vital U.S. partner and democratic success story. We hope you will take advantage of all the opportunities that our shared values and robust relationship with Taiwan offer. For questions, please contact the Department of State at: EAP-IC-Office-DL@state.gov.

Sincerely,

Daniel Whitley
Administrator
Foreign Agricultural Service
U.S. Department of
Agriculture

Arun Venkataraman
Assistant Secretary of
Commerce for Global Markets,
and Director General of the
U.S. and Foreign Commercial
Service

Daniel J. Kittenbrink
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and
Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State

DRAFT

SUMMARY

Digest: The Act tells the OBDD to establish a trade center for Oregon in Taiwan and Vietnam. (Flesch Readability Score: 68.9).

Directs the Oregon Business Development Department to establish the Oregon-Taiwan Trade Center and the Oregon-Vietnam Trade Center.

Requires the department to study options to reorganize the agency staff structure for the purpose of fostering economic relations and expanding trade between Oregon and the countries in which a trade center is established. Requires the department to submit a report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to economic development no later than September 15, 2026.

Declares an emergency, effective July 1, 2025.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to international economic relations; and declaring an emergency.

3 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

4 **SECTION 1. (1) To foster investment and trade relations between**
5 **Oregon and the following countries, the Oregon Business Development**
6 **Department shall establish:**

7 (a) **The Oregon-Taiwan Trade Center in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, no**
8 **later than January 1, 2026.**

9 (b) **The Oregon-Vietnam Trade Center in Hanoi, Vietnam, no later**
10 **than January 1, 2028.**

11 (2)(a) **The department may establish additional offices in Taiwan**
12 **or Vietnam as necessary to foster economic relations or expand trade.**

13 (b) **The department shall establish a designated fund at each trade**
14 **center for the purpose of supporting strategic priorities.**

15 (3) **Each trade center described in subsection (1) of this section at**

1 the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to eco-
2 nomic development no later than September 15, 2026.

3 SECTION 3. Section 2 of this 2025 Act is repealed on January 2, 2027.

4 SECTION 4. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropri-
5 ation, there is appropriated to the Oregon Business Development De-
6 partment, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, out of the General
7 Fund, the amount of \$500,000, to carry out section 1 (2)(b) of this 2025
8 Act.

9 SECTION 5. This 2025 Act being necessary for the immediate pres-
10 ervation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is de-
11 clared to exist, and this 2025 Act takes effect July 1, 2025.

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