

HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 3634

By COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

April 14

On page 1 of the printed bill, delete lines 4 through 26 and delete pages 2 and 3 and insert:

“SECTION 1. (1) As used in this section:

“(a) ‘Environmental justice community’ has the meaning given that term in ORS 182.535.

“(b) ‘Nonprofit organization’ means an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and that is exempt from income tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code.

“(2) The Water Workforce Program is established in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to increase and diversify the supply of skilled water professionals within the water workforce through workforce development initiatives that include, but are not limited to, providing education and training opportunities to individuals seeking entry into the following sectors:

“(a) Water and wastewater utilities and related industries.

“(b) Water science, engineering and technology.

“(3) The commission shall oversee, and local workforce development boards as defined in ORS 660.300 shall implement, the program. The commission shall provide grants to local workforce development boards to administer the program for the following purposes:

“(a) To identify and address solutions, at the state and regional level, for eliminating barriers to and leveraging opportunities for developing and sustaining pathways that connect individuals to career opportunities within the water workforce, with particular focus on the sectors described under subsection (2) of this section, by examining factors that include, but are not limited to:

“(A) Current education and training pathways for individuals to enter the water workforce;

“(B) Opportunities for building partnerships and sharing resources between water and wastewater utilities and other industries experiencing a shortage of skilled water professionals;

“(C) The barriers encountered by individuals seeking entry into the water workforce and the opportunities to address those barriers;

“(D) The barriers encountered by industries experiencing a shortage of skilled water professionals and the opportunities to address those barriers; and

“(E) Other factors deemed relevant by the local workforce development boards.

“(b) To develop regionally specific strategies for addressing water workforce needs, with a focus on the water and wastewater utilities sector.

“(c) To provide funding to nonprofit organizations, high schools, community colleges, public universities and other entities for the development and operation of water and

1 wastewater utilities training, education and apprenticeship programs that are designed to do
2 the following:

3 “(A) Provide paid on-the-job career and education pathways for obtaining operator cer-
4 tifications for water and wastewater systems;

5 “(B) Engage with water and wastewater utilities to explore and identify potential options
6 to provide financial support to on-the-job career and education pathways for individuals to
7 obtain employment in the water and wastewater utilities sector;

8 “(C) Facilitate partnerships with water and wastewater utilities experiencing skilled
9 workforce shortages to provide job placement services to program participants; and

10 “(D) Identify potential sources for sustainable funding to support the programs.

11 “(d) To partner with nonprofit organizations that serve environmental justice communi-
12 ties to conduct targeted outreach to such communities, promoting awareness of career op-
13 portunities within the water workforce, with a focus on the water and wastewater utilities
14 sector. Priority shall be given to organizations that have demonstrated knowledge and expe-
15 rience with and an established connection to water and wastewater utilities.

16 “(e) To identify and implement strategies to attract, recruit, retain and replace water
17 and wastewater utility operators and support succession planning in rural, coastal and re-
18 mote communities and communities with limited funding and workforce capacity.

19 “(f) To coordinate with state workforce agencies and regional workforce development
20 partners to expand community-based partnerships that aim to support and sustain water
21 workforce development initiatives.

22 “(g) To develop education and training pathways within the water workforce, including
23 but not limited to:

24 “(A) Apprenticeship opportunities; and

25 “(B) Opportunities that provide paid work experience, including stipends and wages.

26 “(h) To provide wraparound supports and services necessary to facilitate engagement in
27 the water workforce, including but not limited to tuition assistance and fee assistance to
28 obtain industry-recognized certificates.

29 “(i) To engage and coordinate with federally recognized tribal governments in this state
30 to assess and address the water and wastewater utilities needs of federally recognized Indian
31 tribes in Oregon.

32 “(j) To fund organizational investments, including but not limited to:

33 “(A) Hiring staff;

34 “(B) Purchasing equipment, technology and other training-related supplies; and

35 “(C) Covering administrative costs.

36 “(4) Prior to distributing any grant funds to a local workforce development board under
37 this section, the commission and the local workforce development board shall enter into an
38 agreement:

39 “(a) Indicating the purposes for which the funds may be used; and

40 “(b) Requiring the local workforce development board to report on the use of funds in a
41 manner described by the commission.

42 “(5) A local workforce development board receiving a grant under this section may dis-
43 tribute grant funds to subgrantees that are:

44 “(a) Nonprofit organizations that partner with the local workforce development board to
45 carry out the targeted outreach described in subsection (3)(d) of this section.

1 “(b) Entities that partner with the local workforce development board to develop and
2 operate programs described in subsection (3)(c) of this section, with priority given to those
3 entities that operate established programs that meet the criteria described under subsection
4 (3)(c)(A) to (D) of this section.

5 “(c) Entities that partner with local workforce development boards to carry out the ac-
6 tivities described under subsection (3) of this section.

7 “(6) No later than September 15 of each even-numbered year, the Higher Education Co-
8 ordinating Commission shall submit a report to the interim committees of the Legislative
9 Assembly relating to labor and business, in the manner provided in ORS 192.254, on the
10 outcomes of the Water Workforce Program, including information reported by a grant re-
11 cipient, and any recommendations for legislation.

12 “(7) The commission may adopt rules necessary to carry out the provisions of this sec-
13 tion.

14 “SECTION 2. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appro-
15 priated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July
16 1, 2025, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$3,500,000, to be distributed to local
17 workforce development boards for the purposes described under section 1 of this 2025 Act.

18 “SECTION 3. (1) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission and local workforce
19 development boards shall consult with the following entities to establish a process and cri-
20 teria for distributing available moneys from funds appropriated to the commission to
21 subgrantees and entities that participate in carrying out the activities described in section
22 1 of this 2025 Act:

23 “(a) Entities that are currently providing education and training pathways for entry into
24 the water workforce.

25 “(b) Industries in need of skilled water professionals, with a focus on industries within
26 the water and wastewater utilities sector.

27 “(2) The commission and the local workforce development boards shall establish the
28 process and criteria not later than the date that is six months after the effective date of this
29 2025 Act.

30 “SECTION 4. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall submit the first re-
31 port required under section 1 (6) of this 2025 Act no later than September 15, 2026.

32 “SECTION 5. This 2025 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public
33 peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2025 Act takes effect
34 on its passage.”.