

Submitter: Johanna Brenner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Commerce and Consumer Protection
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2966

I am writing to support the creation of a Public Finance Task Force which will explore how public financing practices can serve the interests of Oregon's working people. There are many avenues through which public financing can boost Oregon's economy and promote the expansion of public infrastructure, affordable housing, and expanded access to home mortgages.

In particular, I want to highlight the role that public financing could play in cost-effective infrastructure development, including not only transportation (roads, bridges, etc.) but also public buildings such as schools, recreation centers, and government offices. Every major public construction project requires loans that now must be secured from traditional financial institutions which charge high fees and interest rates. These costs can reach as high as 30-50% of the total project costs. A Public Finance Task Force will explore alternatives to a financing system that funnels our public funds to Wall Street institutions, instead of keeping our financing local where these fees and interest payments would circulate back into our economy. Public financing also has the advantage of reducing lending costs and thus the overall costs of infrastructure projects.

It is long beyond time for Oregon to engage in investigating the possibilities and benefits of public financing. Please vote yes on HB 2966.

Sincerely,

Johanna Brenner, Professor Emerita, Portland State University