



February 5, 2025

Gustavo J. Cruz, Jr.
Commission Chair

Marcelino J. Alvarez
Commissioner

Felisa Hagins
Commissioner

Michi Slick
Commissioner

Serena Stoudamire Wesley
Commissioner

Keith Wilson
Mayor

Shea Flaherty Betin
Interim Executive Director

House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Committee Members:

On behalf of [Prosper Portland](#), the economic and urban development agency for the City of Portland, I am writing to express our support for House Bill 2125.

Extreme weather events – heat waves, wildfires, and winter ice storms – have a direct impact on the stability of small businesses, particularly those operating brick and mortar locations which are reliant on foot traffic for their incomes. During the weeklong 2024 winter ice storm, thousands of Portland businesses lost sales, which were exacerbated by power outages and forced closures.

Prosper Portland partnered with the U.S. Small Business Administration to assist businesses affected by the 2024 winter ice storm through our Small Business Stabilization Restore Program. While the grants we offered provided a lifeline to businesses, we no longer have American Rescue Plan Act funds to offer and are not optimistic the federal government will again be able to step in and support.

It is only a matter of time before we will experience events like this again and it is imperative that there are supports to mitigate impacts to our local businesses. HB 2125 will allow small business employees and owners to submit unemployment claims and not have to wait for immediate assistance. In the next few months, Prosper Portland will formally launch the City's first Office of Small Business, connecting community members with tools, support, and financial resources, and we hope to highlight how the State of Oregon, through this bill and its many programs, is there to support local businesses when they need it most.

Thank you,

Shea Flaherty Betin
Interim Executive Director

prosperportland.us

220 NW Second Ave.
Suite 200
Portland, OR
97209-3943

503-823-3200 Main
503-823-3368 Fax