

February 5, 2025

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

**RE: Support for HB 2125 - Economic Resilience Related to Severe Weather Emergencies**

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

Thank you for your consideration of HB 2125, which would allow workers affected by severe weather to receive expedited economic relief.

Multnomah County's Office of Emergency Management plays a vital role in helping our community respond and recover from emergencies and disasters. From the Eagle Creek Fire which displaced residents and closed businesses in 2017 to the January 2024 winter storm resulting in widespread power outages due to downed power lines. Nearly 200,000 customers in Multnomah County lost power for some portion of the storm, which also forced people to seek shelter and which closed businesses.

As we see the frequency of severe weather emergencies accelerate due to the impacts of climate change, we need to provide a more flexible response to help our communities recover. Part of that response should be supporting workers and businesses that were most impacted by these emergencies. House Bill 2125 will help provide economic relief more rapidly by allowing the Employment Department Director to waive the waiting week for benefits in the event of a state-declared emergency.

Thank you for considering my comments, and I respectfully request your support for HB 2125.

Sincerely,

*Christopher Voss*

Chris Voss  
Director, Office of Emergency Management

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