

February 9, 2025

**TO:** Members of the House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

**FR:** Duke Shepard, Oregon Business & Industry

**RE:** Support for HB 2411

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Chair Nguyen and members of the committee, for the record, my name is Duke Shepard, and I am a senior policy director for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses across a wide variety of industries from all 36 of Oregon's counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ over 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private-sector businesses drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

When I last testified here, I referenced the expansion of Entek, a great Oregon-based company, in Indiana. That expansion was announced to be taking place on a 350-acre site in an industrial park in Terre Haute, Indiana. For context, the UGB expansion in Washington County considered by the Governor for the semiconductor industry was 373 acres. And that was only considered, with great controversy and threats of lawsuits. Ultimately, nothing actually happened.

Much of the land we have is questionable in terms of usability because of location, acreage, and other constraints like wetlands. We have industrial land on paper, meeting the technical requirements of land use planning regulations, but we don't actually have land that is usable or meets market needs.

I know of two manufacturing businesses right now, both women-owned and minority-owned, operating in the energy sector. One has already expanded to Clark County. The other has been searching for property that meets her needs, and it's likely that her expansion will end up in southwest Washington as well.

We are competing against the entire country just for our own businesses to grow and expand, before we even talk about recruiting businesses from out of state, where we are also massively outgunned. This bill creates an important, though modest, tool for state and local governments to make some progress in improving Oregon's competitiveness.

OBI urges your support for this bill and for funding this tool with as many resources as possible through the Ways and Means process. It is one of the most important economic development policy bills you will see this session.