

Testimony of Anneliese Koehler, Legislative Affairs Manager

In Support of House Bill 2411

House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business and Trade

February 10, 2025



Metro is the elected regional government that serves nearly 1.7 million people in the 24 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of public services that includes land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, housing and homeless services, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

Metro supports HB 2411, which establishes the Industrial Site Loan Fund and invests \$40 million into the fund.

Metro has long been a leader in supporting the industrial land needs of our region. Every six years, we partner with local jurisdictions, business leaders and economists to identify the employment lands needed through our urban growth management process. Through that process, we discovered that the biggest barrier to new industrial development in our region is not land supply, but whether land is ready for development.

In 2011, Metro joined with public and private sector partners to complete a comprehensive review of the market-readiness of the Portland region's inventory of industrial sites of 25 acres or more. The study found that our region has many places where high-paying manufacturing and other traded-sector jobs can grow, but these sites often require investment to make them ready for new employers to develop. These investments and actions include regulatory approvals (permitting, mitigation), infrastructure (sewer, water, transportation, fill), site aggregation, brownfield cleanup, and state/local actions (land division, rezoning, annexation).

These findings were confirmed again recently with the Semiconductor Task Force and the Clean Energy Task Force findings. Both efforts found that a significant barrier to Oregon's success in growing and maintaining these industries was development-ready industrial land.

HB 2411 establishes the Industrial Site Loan Fund and allocates \$40m to the program. It will provide the critical, upfront capital needed to make industrial sites development ready and gives local government a crucial tool to ensure that Oregon is ready for economic opportunities and growth. Metro urges the Legislature to pass HB 2411 and provide a much-needed tool to help grow our state's economy.