

February 11, 2025

Senate Committee on Education  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I am writing this letter with immense pride and enthusiasm in support of **SB 720** and the Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center’s (POIC) **Education and Workforce Center**. This project is deeply personal for the City of Gresham and the surrounding region, as it represents a critical investment in the future of East Multnomah County.

The City of Gresham strongly supports this initiative and has demonstrated its commitment through significant investments. The city sold the land for this project to POIC for **one dollar**, despite its then-market value of approximately **\$1.75 million**, and has further contributed **\$500,000 in pre-development funds**. These investments underscore our unwavering belief in the transformative power of this facility and its long-term benefits to our region.

Too often, East Multnomah County is forced to choose between competing capital projects across cities, jurisdictions, and community-based organizations. However, the **POIC Education and Workforce Center is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to break cycles of poverty and create pathways to prosperity**. The region it serves is among the most diverse in Oregon and has historically seen some of the lowest levels of investment. With a **45% poverty rate, a population that speaks dozens of languages, and over 70% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch**, this community is in urgent need of the resources and opportunities this facility will provide.

This center will **uplift an entire generation of Oregonians** by serving as a critical workforce pipeline, connecting historically underserved youth and adults to career pathways in **semiconductors, career technical education, and the trades**. The legislature has made substantial investments in these industries, and this facility will **amplify and maximize those dollars by ensuring a trained, ready, and diverse workforce is available to meet industry needs**.

The **POIC Education and Workforce Center is more than a building—it is a lifeline**. It represents a tangible commitment to equity, economic mobility, and the power of education and workforce development. I urge you to support **SB 720** and help bring this transformative vision to reality.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



**Larry Morgan**  
Chief of Staff  
City of Gresham